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Latimer Churchyard

MISCELLANEOUS PLAYS,

BY

JOANNA BAILLIE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER-RROW;
AND A. CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH.

1805.

Strahan and Prefor,
Printers-Street.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN the language of the two Tragedies of this volume, a few slight alterations, I hope for the better, will be found from that of the first edition, so slight indeed, that I scarcely know whether or not they deserve to be mentioned. As for the Comedy, believing it has been generally disliked, I have been afraid to touch it, lest, going over it again, deprived of that animation so favourable to amendment which encouragement always gives, I should make it worse instead of better.

Several of my friends, since *Rayner* was published, and one of them, I must confess, for whose judgment I have the highest respect, before it was published, have objected to the description of the flooded river, Act 5th, page 127, as very improper in the circumstances under which it is introduced. I readily grant it may be apt to appear so at first sight; but I should think, that when those circumstances are more perfectly considered, this objec-

tion will be considerably weakened. When the Countess and Confessor are told the bridge is broken down, the distance which the Messenger must then go, in the short time allowed for it, is so great that it seems impossible, and therefore overwhelms their thoughts. To have desired the Messenger, notwithstanding, to mount his horse and set off immediately, would, as far as I am able to judge, *not* have been natural; for it is upon slight, not upon great, occasions that the mind recovers itself sufficiently from disappointment to give directions immediately as to what is next to be done. I have supposed the Countess and Confessor not as listening to the Messenger's description, but as recovering, while he speaks, from the shock, and considering whether their object is still possible. The difficulty here seems to me to be this; whether is it most natural for the Messenger himself, just returned from beholding an awful sight in nature, to have his mind most engrossed with that, or with the idea of riding to the town in time to save the prisoner, a thing which appears to him absolutely impossible? for it should be remembered, that till they call him upon the stage, he has no idea of the nature of the errand for which he was kept in readiness, therefore, it could not beforehand have interested his mind. If the first of these suppositions is most natural, I should think I am in a good degree justified in introducing this passage; if the last, I am certainly wrong. It is a fault, however, easily rectified by drawing a pen across every line of the

speech except the two first; and if the play should ever be acted, this must be done for another reason, viz. that no theatre could afford to put into such an insignificant character as that of a Messenger an actor capable of reciting it.—Another objection may be made to this speech, that people in his situation do not make such speeches. People in his situation of life will not, it is true, to any length make speeches of sentiment and reflection; but the strong impression made upon them by a grand and awful object, will put them, for the time being, in possession of a power of language and strength of description which I am not vain enough to suppose I can equal. The language of description, having nothing to do with artificial phrases or abstract words, is more equally at the command of all ranks of men than any other, that of strong passion excepted.

It has also been objected, from many different quarters, that the incident of Ohio sawing across the main beam of the scaffold, &c. is a very bad one, and so absurd, that it would set an audience into a roar of laughter. That it is not a good one I very readily admit; but, in representation, the absurdity, or I ought rather to say, ludicrousness of it, so far from being more obvious, would be less so than in the closet. In reading a play, what is represented as passing upon the stage, and what is related as passing elsewhere, are both brought before the imagination with nearly equal strength; but, in representation, what is only related sinks into a degree

of dimness and distance, by which it is almost comparatively annihilated. This incident, however, is most certainly not happily conceived, and as it is all comprised within the compass of a very few lines, might easily be changed into any other in which Ohio is still made the agent, by any person who should be willing to bring this play before an audience.

In Act first of Constantine, page 307, I find that my meaning has been sometimes misunderstood. It never once entered into my idea to represent the Emperor as yielding to his wife's fears, so far as to send his friends to face the danger threatened from the outrageous multitude without him. I have made him, whilst he appears to yield, put such conduct in the meanest and most contemptible light, trusting that her generous nature would revolt from it, as an easier way of making her submit to the necessity than giving a determined refusal. In a narrative, where all the secret thoughts of the heart can be as easily made known as those which a character is made to utter, there is little excuse either for leaving your meaning in a doubtful state, or bringing it out too laboriously; but, in a story carried on entirely, or almost entirely, in dialogue, it is very difficult to avoid both these faults, into which I confess I am too apt to fall,

TO THE READER.

THOUGH I have already met with so much indulgence from the public for a work obscured with many faults, and might venture, without great mistrust, to bring before it the Plays which I now offer, unaccompanied by any previous demand upon the attention of my reader, which is generally an unwelcome thing, I must nevertheless beg for a few minutes to trespass upon his patience.—It has been, and still is, my strongest desire to add a few pieces to the stock of what may be called our national or permanently acting plays, how unequal soever my abilities may be to the object of my ambition *. I have, therefore, in the “Series of Plays,” though pursuing a particular plan, endeavoured fully to delineate the character of the chief person of each drama, independently of his being the subject of a particular passion; so that we might have an idea of what kind of a man he would have been had no

* See page 58. of the introduction to the “Series of Plays.”

circumstances ever arisen to bring that passion violently into action. I have endeavoured also distinctly to discriminate the inferior characters, because they, not being allowed to exhibit violent passion, lest they should too much interfere with the principal object, had more need of such distinct discrimination to prevent them from being altogether insignificant, and to prevent each play from becoming a mere picture of passion which might be tedious and heavy to an audience accustomed to variety of character and incident. This I have done, how unskilfully soever I may have done it, with a hope, which I will not yet abandon, that some of the dramas belonging to that work may hereafter be thought worthy of being admitted into that class of plays to which I am so desirous of adding something. However, I am sensible that were those plays more successful than I dare flatter myself to expect, they all require too much power of expression and delicacy of discrimination in the actor who represents the principal character—the whole depends too much on the exertion of one individual, and such a one too as can very rarely be found, ever to become plays that will commonly be brought upon the stage*. Convinced of this,

* Let it not be supposed from the above that I have the slightest intention of discontinuing the "Series of Plays." So far from it, I hope that the work will go on the better for being occasionally broke in upon by pieces of a different kind; and though I admit they are not altogether well

as well as wishing sometimes to vary my employment, I have long since proposed to myself not to confine my pen entirely to one task, but to write from time to time, as inclination might lead me or circumstances suggest, an unconnected or (may I so call it?) a free, independent play, that might have a chance of pleasing upon a stage, circumstanced as stages generally are, with no particular advantages. I have wished to leave behind me in the world a few plays, some of which might have a chance of continuing to be acted even in our canvass theatres and barns ; and of preserving to my name some remembrance with those who are lovers of that species of amusement which I have above every other enjoyed.

I am well aware, however, that having succeeded in one species of writing gives us no sure grounds to presume that we shall be equally fortunate in any other ; no, not even in that which most nearly approaches to it. Not only the epic poet may write a bad tragedy, but the sonnet writer may find himself greatly at a loss in composing a few tender couplets for music. I have seldom seen any piece, not appearing to me to possess great merit (for such things I have seen), succeed upon the stage, without feeling inclined to say to myself, “ don’t despise this : very probably in

fitted for the stage, as it is commonly circumstanced, I still think plays upon that plan are capable of being made upon the stage more interesting than any other species of drama.

attempting, even upon no higher grounds, such success as the present, and giving to it also the whole bent of your thoughts, you would find yourself miserably disappointed." I offer to the public, therefore, a work of a kind so nearly related to that in which I have already had some degree of success and encouragement, with almost the diffidence of an entirely inexperienced writer.

To publish a volume of miscellaneous plays, I am very sensible, is making a large demand upon the attention of my readers, and exposing the plays themselves likewise to the danger of being read in a way that will diminish their effect, and in every way prove a great disadvantage to them. People are in the habit of reading but one new play at a time, which by this means makes a full undivided impression upon the mind ; and though we are not obliged to read all the plays of a volume, one following another, so that they must crowd, and jostle, and tread upon one another's heels ; yet who, with a new work in his hands, if he be at all pleased with it, will shut up the book after the first portion of it is over, and wait till he has properly digested what he has got before he proceed with the remainder ? I am inclined to believe that each of the plays in the series has at first suffered considerably from being read in this manner ; but in pieces connected with one another this mode of publication is in some degree necessary, at least there is in it more propriety. So much am I convinced of this that it was at one time my intention to publish these

plays separately, and it is with some difficulty that I have been prevailed upon to give up this intention. May I then beg of my reader to pardon, in the first place, so great a demand upon his attention by offering at once a volume of plays to his perusal; in the next place, to have the goodness not to read it hastily, but to pause, some days at least, between each play, that they may have in this respect the same advantages which new plays generally have. Let him not smile: this last is a request which I earnestly make, and if it is not complied with, I shall almost be tempted to think myself hardly treated*.

I must also mention, that each of the plays contained in this volume has been, at one time or other, offered for representation to one or other of

* It may be urged, indeed, that unconnected poems bound up together, and almost every other species of composition, must suffer for being read in hasty succession in the same way. And so in some degree they do. But in reading descriptions of nature, successions of thoughts, and narratives of every kind, the ideas they represent to the mind are as troops drawn out before it in loose marshalled array, whose most animated movements it surveys still as a spectator; whilst in reading a drama, where every character speaks immediately in his own person, we by sympathy rush, as it were, ourselves into the battle, and fight under every man's coat of mail by turns. This is an exercise of the mind so close and vigorous, that we retire from it exhausted; and if curiosity should urge us on without sufficient rest to the next engagement that calls for us, we enter the field bewildered, and spiritless, and weak.

our winter theatres, and been rejected. This my reader will readily believe is not done in the spirit of vanity; and I beg of him also to believe, that neither is it at all done in that of complaint. I merely mention it, because otherwise it must have appeared absurd to introduce from the press what has been expressly written to come before the public in a different manner, without making any attempt to present it in its own peculiar mode. I must, in this case, have either appeared pusillanimously timid in shrinking from that open trial to which my contemporaries submit, or sullenly and ungraciously fastidious.

The chief thing to be regretted in this failure of my attempts is, that having no opportunity of seeing any of my pieces exhibited, many faults respecting stage effect and general impression will to me remain undiscovered, and those I may hereafter write be of course unimproved. Another disadvantage, perhaps, may present itself to the mind of my reader; viz. that not having the trial of their merits immediately in prospect, I may become careless or forgetful of those requisites in the drama that peculiarly refer to the stage. But if I know any thing at all of my own character, this will not be the case. I shall persevere in my task, circumstanced as I am, with as anxious unremitting attention to every thing that regards the theatre as if I were there forthwith to receive the full reward of all my labours, or complete and irretrievable condemnation. So strong is my attachment to the

drama of my native country, at the head of which stands one whom every British heart thinks of with pride, that a distant and uncertain hope of having even but a very few of the pieces I offer to the public represented to it with approbation, when some partiality for them as plays that have been frequently read shall have put it into the power of future managers to bring them upon the stage with less risk of loss than would be at present incurred, is sufficient to animate me to every exertion that I am capable of making.

But I perceive a smile rising upon the cheek of my reader at the sanguine calculations of human vanity, and in his place I should most probably smile too. Let that smile, however, be tempered with respect, when it is considered how much mankind is indebted to this pleasing but deceitful principle in our nature. It is necessary that we should have some flattery to carry us on with what is arduous and uncertain, and who will give it to us in a manner so kindly and applicable to our necessities as even we our own selves? How poor and stationary must the affairs of men have remained, had every one, at the beginning of a new undertaking, considered the probability of its success with the cool, temperate mind of his reasonable, unconcerned neighbour?

It is now time to say something of the particular plays here offered to the public.

In the first I have attempted, in the character of Rayner, to exhibit a young man of an easy, amiable

temper, with delicacy of sentiment and a well principled mind, tempted, in the extremity of distress, to join with unworthy men in the proposed commission of a detestable deed ; and afterwards, under one of the severest trials that human fortitude can be called upon to endure, bearing himself up, not with the proud and lofty firmness of a hero, but with the struggles of a man, who, conscious of the weakness of nature within him, feels diffident of himself to the last, and modestly aims at no more than what, being a soldier and the son of a brave father, he considers as respectable and becoming. One who aspires not to admiration but shrinks from contempt ; and who being naturally brave in the field, and of a light buoyant disposition, bears up throughout with an animation and cheerfulness by no means inconsistent with a considerable degree of the dread of death, when called upon to encounter it with deliberation and certainty. To him I have opposed the character of a young man, in whom, though with some good affections, there is a foundation of natural depravity, greatly strengthened by the bad education he has received from an absurdly indulgent mother, brought by his crimes to an untimely end, and meeting it with a very different spirit.

Of the characters of the two principal women in this piece, opposed to two women of a very different description I shall say nothing. The second and inferior persons of the drama I have endeavoured to delineate with sufficient discrimination to

make us feel acquainted with them, though much force or originality is a praise which I readily grant they are not entitled to.

I am afraid the varied conduct of the whole, sometimes gay and even ludicrous, sometimes tender or distressing, but scarcely at any time solemn or dignified, will be displeasing to those who are accustomed to admire tragedy in its more exalted form. I flatter myself, however, that as I have not, for the sake of variety, introduced any under-plot nor patched scenes unconnected with the main business, but have endeavoured to make every thing arise naturally from the circumstances of the story, I shall not on this score be very much censured*.

This play was written many years ago, when I was not very old, and still younger from my ignorance of every thing regarding literature than from my years. This, however, I do not mention as any apology for its defects. A work that cannot be read with approbation unless the mind is continu-

* That part of the scene, Act III. in the court of the prison, where the songs of the confined chief of banditti and a slight sketch of his character are introduced, though very appropriate to the place, stands loose from the business of the play, and may therefore be considered as superfluous and contradicting what I have said above. But as it is short, and is a fancy come into my head from hearing stories in my childhood of Rob Roy, our Robin Hood of Scotland, I cannot find in my heart to blot it out, though, either on the stage or in the closet, any body is welcome to do it for me by passing it over entirely.

ally referring to the particular circumstances under which it was written, ought not to be brought before the public, but (when those circumstances are very extraordinary) as a literary curiosity. Reading over this work, after it had been laid by for such a length of time that it was to me almost like the work of a stranger, I thought there was sufficient matter in it, with some alterations, to make an interesting play, not unsuited to the common circumstances of even our country theatres; and indeed I have altered it so considerably that full one half of it may be said to be newly written. In the original it was uniformly written in blank verse, and in many of the scenes, particularly those approaching to comic, my reader will readily believe it was sufficiently rugged and hobbling; I have, therefore, taken the liberty of writing in plain prose all those parts where I thought blank verse would be cumbersome and stilted. The only scenes in the play that remain exactly or nearly as they stood in the original are, that between Rayner and the Old Man of the wood, in which I have scarcely altered a single word, and that, Act IV. Scene III. between Zaterloo and his mother.

A play, with the scene laid in Germany, and opening with a noisy meeting of midnight robbers over their wine, will, I believe, suggest to my readers certain sources from which he will suppose my ideas must have certainly been taken. Will he give me perfect credit when I assure him, at the time this play was written, I had not only never read any

German plays, but was even ignorant that such things as German plays of any reputation existed? I hope—I am almost bold enough to say, I know that he will. And that I may not abuse his faith by smuggling any thing under its protection not strictly entitled to it, I must inform him that the short scene between Rayner and his servant Herman which I thought in some degree necessary to shew the character and temper of the master, and to interest us in his favour before the great action of the piece begins, was entirely introduced in my latter alterations, and is therefore liable to whatever charge of imitation it may seem to deserve, though I have not been sensible, in writing it, of having any particular class of authors in my mind.

Of the comedy that follows it I shall say but little. To those who are chiefly accustomed, in works of this kind, to admire quick turns of thought, pointed expression, witty repartee, and the ludicrous display of the transient passing follies and fashions of the world, this play will have but few attractions. The representation of a few characters, not, I believe, “over-stepping the modesty of nature,” who are connected together in a very simple plot, carried on throughout with cheerfulness, unmixed with any pretensions to great refinement of sentiment, or delicate strokes of tenderness, is all this piece has to boast of: and with no higher pretensions, the greater proportion of my readers will not, I flatter myself, find fault with me for having made it a kind of division or stepping-stone between

the two tragedies ; where, if they do not enjoy a brilliant sunshine, they may at least have a little flickering of the sunbeams to play upon them as they pass from one sombre gloom to another. It has lain by me for many years, and has received a very few inconsiderable alterations.

The last play of this volume was written in the hope of being brought out upon our largest theatre, enriched as it then was by two actors whose noble appearance and strong powers of expression seemed to me peculiarly suited to its two principal characters. The subject of it is taken from Gibbon's account of the siege of Constantinople by the Turks. It was a subject that pressed itself upon me, at a time when I had no thoughts of writing at all, and (if I may use the expression) *would* be written upon. The character there displayed of Constantine Paleologus, the last of the Cæsars, a modest, affectionate, domestic man; nursed in a luxurious court in habits of indulgence and indolence; without ambition, even without hope, rousing himself up on the approach of unavoidable ruin; and deserted by every Christian prince in Europe, deserted by his own worthless and enervated subjects, supported alone by a generous band, chiefly of strangers, devoting themselves to him from generous attachment;—to see him thus circumstanced, nobly fronting the storm, and perishing as became the last of a long line of kings, the last of the Romans;—this was a view of man—of noble and dignified exertion which it was impossible for me resist, though well

aware that no play I am capable of writing can ever be equal to what such a subject deserves. So much was I pleased with those generous ties—may I be permitted to make use of a scripture phrase, and say, those “cords of a man?” binding together the noble Paleologus and his brave imperial band, that, had I followed my own inclination, delineating those would have been the principal object of the piece. But convinced that something more was requisite to interest a common audience, and give sufficient variety to the scenes, I introduced the character of Valeria, and brought forward the domestic qualities of Constantine as well as those of the unfortunate prince and beloved leader.

Mahomet and Justiniani are the only characters in the piece, Constantine excepted, that are not imaginary. The first will be found, I hope, to correspond with the character given of him by the historian. To alter, for the idle convenience of poetry, conspicuous, or indeed any characters that have been known in the world, appears to me highly blameable, though in filling up an outline given us by history we cannot well avoid heightening or diminishing the general effect. Justiniani, if I well remember (for I have not the history by me at present to refer to), was a noble Genoese, who, after a life distinguished for military honour, disgraced himself by being the first to turn his back when the Turks attacked the breach on the day of the last general assault, and was the immediate cause of the city being taken. He is said after-

wards on this account to have died of a broken heart. I have endeavoured to represent him as a proud man with a high sense of honour, rather than natively brave, and therefore particularly punctilious in every thing that concerns the reputation of a soldier. To him I have ventured to oppose a military character of a very different description, in the commander of the Genoese vessels which so gallantly forced their way into the port of Constantinople during the siege ; and if I have dwelt too much on the rough generous gallantry of a brave seaman, and given too many allusions throughout the whole to the dangers and vicissitudes of a seafaring life, my country, which has owed so much to brave men of this class, will stand forth in my defence, and say, that a Briton upon this subject writes proudly, and therefore is tempted to write profusely. In the other imaginary characters, particularly that of Othus, I have endeavoured to accord with the circumstances of the times ; for it is to be remembered, that slothful and corrupted as the inhabitants of Constantinople then were, amongst them were still to be found the chief remains of ancient literature and refinement *.

* The character of Othoric, or rather the circumstance of his death, I have taken from an account I have read somewhere, I believe in one of Dr. Moore's Novels, of a Highland sergeant, who saved himself by a similar stratagem from the torments prepared for him by the American Indians.

Perhaps in the conduct of this tragedy I have sometimes weakened the interest of it by attending too much to magnificence and show. But it was intended for a large theatre, where a play is rather looked at than listened to, and where, indeed, by a great proportion of the audience, it cannot be heard; and though I might now very easily remove that show, yet to place in its stead what it has most probably kept back, would be almost impossible. For that which has probably been prevented by it, should have been woven and incorporated into the original texture of the piece, and cannot afterwards be inserted here and there in streaks and patches. It has also, I am inclined to believe, received some injury from my having had, when I sketched my two chief characters, the actors who I intended should represent them, too much in my thoughts. This is a fault, and I am sensible it is so: but those who have seen and admired the great powers of those actors in the highest line of tragedy, will easily admit that I have not sinned without a strong temptation. I hope also that this, standing alone, as a single offence of the kind, amongst a considerable number of plays which, if I live long enough, my present task will probably increase to, may be forgiven.

I am sensible there is not that strength and compactness of plot; that close connection of events producing one another in this play, which is a great perfection in every dramatic work, and which I am sorry to say is a perfection that is not to be found

in any work of mine that I have hitherto published. However, I flatter myself I have in this instance a good excuse to make. It appears to me that, in taking the subject of a poem or play from real story, we are not warranted, even by the prerogatives of bardship, to assign imaginary causes to great public events. We may accompany those events with imaginary characters and circumstances of no great importance, that alter them no more in the mind of the reader than the garniture with which a painter decorates the barrenness of some well-known rock or mountain that serves for a landmark to the inhabitants of the surrounding country. He may clothe its rugged sides with brushwood, and hang a few storm-stunted oaks on its bare peaks; he may throw a thin covering of mist on some untoward line of its acclivity, and bring into stronger light the bold storied towerings of its pillared cliffs; he may even stretch the rainbow of heaven over its gigantic head, but its large and general form must remain unaltered. To have made a romantic passion for Valeria the cause of Mahomet's besieging the city, would, I believe, have pleased the generality of readers, and have made this play appear to them more like what a play ought to be; but I must then have done what I consider as wrong.

It would be impertinent to proceed farther in pointing out the merit, if it has any, or demerit of this tragedy, of which I cannot pretend to be a very clear-sighted or impartial judge. I leave it, with its companions, to my reader, who will, I doubt not,

peruse them with reasonable indulgence, and more than this it would be foolish even to desire. If I find that, upon the whole, these plays have given more pleasure to the public than the reverse, I shall not less cheerfully bring forward, at some future time, those which remain behind, because their faults shall have been fully exposed to the censure they deserve.

RAYNER:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

RAYNER.

COUNT ZATERLOO, *a worthless dissipated nobleman
of ruined fortune, and chief of a band of lawless
ruined men, like himself.*

BERNARD, }
SEBASTIAN, } *Gentlemen and followers of Zaterloo.*

HARDIBRAND, *an old general.*

MARDONIO, *a monk.*

Old man of the Wood.

OHIO, *a negro attached to the prison.*

HERMAN, *servant to Rayner.*

RICHARD.

BERTRAM.

GOBAS.

*Keeper of the Prison, Clown, Executioners, Turnkey,
Jailor, Messenger, Landlord, Confessor, Crowd,
&c.*

WOMEN:

ELIZABETH.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO, *mother to Zaterloo.*

MIRA, *a courtesan.*

ALICE, *friend to Mira.*

SCENE,—Germany, near the frontiers of Poland and
Silesia.

RAYNER.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A noise of voices and unruly merriment is heard, whilst the curtain draws up, and discovers Count Zaterloo, Bernard, Sebastian, and others of their band, seated round a table with wine, &c.*

COUNT ZATERLOO.

HA! ha! ha! ha! with all this noisy mirth,
Should some grave stranger, on his way misled,
Now push the door a-jar, and look upon us
Thus set, what class of men should we be deem'd?
A set of light hearts, snug in fortune's lap,
Who will not go to bed because we may?
Or club of sharpers, flush'd with full success,
New from the spoiling of some simple fool?
Or troop of strolling players, at our ease,
After the labours of our kingly sorrows,
With throats new cool'd at as great charge of wine
As our tough lungs have cost of lady's tears?

BERNARD.

No, no, thou hast not hit upon it yet:
He'd take thee for the heir of some old miser,

Treating thy friends, as first fruits of thy kingdom,
 With flowing bumpers to the quiet rest
 Of thy good kinsman's soul.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Yes, Bernard, thou say'st well: and thy dark
 visage,
 Lank and unfitted to all mirth, would mark thee
 The undertaker, who amongst the guests
 Had come on matters of his fable trade,
 Grinning a strange, uncomely, jaw-bone smile
 O'er the near prospect of his future gains.

SEBASTIAN.

Methinks, at least, in this gay, jolly band,
 He scarcely would discover needy men,
 Who better days have seen.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Tut, man! thou art too grave; thou art too
 grave—
 Which of you sung that song with merry lay,
 Some few nights since? Come, let us have it now—

S O N G.

*Ye who fain would happy be,
 Give the hand, and join with me:
 They who toil the weary day,
 They who bend with locks of grey,
 They who tread the beaten way,
 Fools who work that we may play,*

*Fold their weary arms to sleep,
Come, let us our vigil keep.*

*Fellows, join, and never fear ;
Ye who would be happy, hear.
With the sober and the meek,
Lighter flies the passing week ?
In his dwelling warm and sleek,
Brighter smiles the rich man's cheek ?
Wiser things may wise men say,
But we are wiser far than they.*

*Come, light spirits, light and free,
Wiseſt they who fooliſh be.
He who hammers at the pot,
He who brews for every ſot,
He who made my hoſe and coat,
Is a better man I wot ;
Yet were we form'd, events declare,
He to work and I to wear.*

*Miſtreſs of the miſty ſhroud,
O, lovely moon ! come from thy cloud.
When thou o'erlook'ſt the ocean's brine,
Ourſelves we view in floods of wine.
Our conſtancy reſembles thine ;
Like thee in borrow'd robes we ſhine ;
Then let us, in thy kindred light,
Still wake, the rulers of the night.*

COUNT ZATERLOO.

It is a song of Halbert's, is it not?
He was a social jolly-hearted mate,
And had a knack of making ready rhymes.

BERNARD.

I knew him well : what has become of him ?

COUNT ZATERLOO (*pretending not to hear*).
Fill up your glaſs, and let the flaſk go round.

BERNARD.

What has become of Halbert, doſt thou know ?

COUNT ZATERLOO (*ſtill pretending not to hear*).
This wine is richly flavour'd, is it not ?

BERNARD.

It is.—But Halbert ; know ye aught of him ?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

The devil take thy question, aſking ſpirit !
For when thou get'ſt a notion by the ſkirt,
Thou, like an Engliſh bull-dog, keep'ſt thy hold,
And wilt not let it go.—
He ſhot himſelf in priſon ſome months ſince :
Now, there's thine answer for thee ; art thou ſatis-
fied ?

(*A deep and long pauſe ; then Zaterloo ſtarts
up as if he recollected ſomething.*)

He will be with us ere I've pav'd his way.

SEBASTIAN.

Hast thou some new associate to propose?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Know ye the younger branch of Valvo's house?
Whose valiant father left him but his sword
And his proud spirit, thro' this changeful world
To shape his way, with heart as truly tempered
To all the softest witch'ries of refinement
As e'er own'd cherish'd heir of wide domains,
In palace nurs'd.

SEBASTIAN.

I've seen him when a youth,
But he since then has of a foreign state
The soldier been; and had not now returned,
But in the hope, 'tis said, of being heir
To his great uncle's vast and rich possessions,
Of which that villain Hubert has depriv'd him
With treach'rous wiles. Poor heart! he has my
pity.
'Tis said a ling'ring fever seiz'd upon him
From disappointment; and I marvel not;
The stroke was most severe.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

And felt more keenly,
For that he left behind him, in the country
To which he now belongs, a gentle maid
And his bethroth'd, with whom he thought to share

His promis'd wealth.

But these things rest.—Thus driven as we are
To this uncertain, daring course of life,
The stronger and the more respectable
Our band, the greater chance of prospering.
Our number is too small; and, by my soul,
To see a mean, plebeian, vulgar knave,
Admitted of our fellowship, still rubs
Against my nature. Such a man as Rayner
Is precious, and, once gain'd, is sure and steadfast.
But few days since I met him, dark and thoughtful,
With melancholy and unwonted gait
Slow saunt'ring thro' lone, unfrequented paths,
Like one whose soul from man's observing eye
Shrinks gall'd, as shrinks the member newly torn
From every lightest touch. Seeing him thus,
I mark'd him for my man.

BERNARD.

Did'st thou accost him?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Yes; when to my greeting;
“Thou see'st I am unhappy, go thy ways,”
He fretful said, and turn'd. I still persisted,
With soothing words which thrill'd against his heart,
(For in our youthful days we once were playmates,)
Like the sweet tones of some forgotten song,
Till, like a pent-up flood swollen to the height,
He pour'd his griefs into my breast with tears,

Such as the manliest men in their cross'd lives
Are sometimes forc'd to shed.

SEBASTIAN.

And spoke he of his love?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Nay, there indeed
He was reserv'd; but that part of his story,
Which I from sure authority have learnt,
I still thro' broken words could shrewdly read,
Altho' he nam'd it not.

BERNARD.

Hast thou explain'd to him our course of life?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

No, that had been too much: but can'st thou
doubt,
Suff'ring such wrongs as Hubert's artful baseness
Has put upon him, he will scruple long,
Thus circumstanc'd, to join his arm with ours
In murd'ring the rich villain?

BERNARD (*looking at Sebastian, who shrinks back*).

I pray thee call it shooting! that plain word
Still makes Sebastian, like a squeamish dame,
Shrink and look lily-fac'd. To shoot a man
As one in battle shoots a fronted foe;
As from the tavern's broil, in measur'd field,
One shoots a friend, is nought:—but that word
murder—

It hath a horrid sound ; pray thee, good captain,
Remember 'tis a band of gentlemen
Thou dost command, and let such gentle phrase
Fall from thy tongue as gentle ears may suit.

(Omnes laughing loud at Sebastian.)

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Hush ! Rayner is at hand, I hear his steps.

Enter Rayner.

I give you welcome, Rayner, with my heart :
These are my friends, of whom I well might boast,
But that it seems like boasting of myself.
Here, take your place, and join our fellowship,
There is but little need of ceremony
With those whom like misfortunes bring together.

RAYNER.

I take my seat, honour'd in such a place ;
And so far to misfortune am indebted,
Which has procur'd it for me. *(Sits down.)*

BERNARD *(drinking to Rayner)*.

This do I fill to future fellowship :
To that which makes, at fortune's lowest ebb,
A few brave men united, mock the world
And all its plodding rules ; enabling them
Boldly to seize their portion of life's feast,
Which griping av'rice or unjust oppression
Would from them snatch, whilst with insulting
scorn
It scoffs at poverty and patient want.

RAYNER.

Thou truly say'st ; at least I have observ'd
That those who bear misfortunes over meekly
Do but persuade mankind that they and want
Are all too fitly match'd to be disjoin'd,
And so to it they leave them.

BERNARD.

'Tis ever so :
Even good men then neglect them ; but the base,
They, who by mean and undermining arts
To o'ergrown wealth attain, like the ass's heel
'Gainst the sick lion's low and lanken breast
Spurn at them.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Yes, good Bernard, thou speak'st truly.
For I myself, who, as thou know'st right well,
Am not too meekly to misfortune bent,
Have somewhat of the worthless ass's kick
Against my bosom felt.—'Lone and unarm'd—
Had but one brave companion by my side
My anger shar'd, full dearly had the knave—
But let it pass—he had a brave man's curse,
And that will rest upon him.

BERNARD.

But, pray thee, Count, tell us the circumstance,
Thou speak'st in mystery.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

A few days since, returning near my home,
 Upon a narrow path rais'd from a road
 With mud choak'd up, behind me trampling came,
 A band of liv'ried rascals at his heels,
 In all his awkward state, a puff'd-up worldling,
 And rode me off my way; whilst looking back,
 He turned his head with a malicious grin
 At the poor spatter'd wretch, who in the mud
 Stood showering curses on him.

RAYNER.

Ay, 'tis the cursed insolence of wealth
 That makes the poor man poor. Thou wert un-
 arm'd?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I was; or by this hand, poor as I am,
 I should have spent a brace of bullets on him
 With much good-will.

RAYNER.

Know'st thou the villain's name?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Faith, I'm almost ashamed to tell it thee.
 Thou know'st him well: he is a rich man now;
 His name is Hubert.

RAYNER.

There lives no blacker villain on the earth

Than him who bears it.—But thou know’st it all.
 When from a distant country, where with honour
 I earn’d a foldier’s pittance, the fair promises
 Of a near kinsman tempted me, and I,
 Tho’ by my nature most incautious,
 And little skill’d to gain by flatt’ring arts
 An old man’s love, high in his favour stood ;
 That villain Hubert rous’d his jealous nature
 With artful tales of slights and heir-like wishes,
 And covert mock’ry of his feeble age,
 Till, in the bitterness of changed love,
 All his vast wealth he did bequeath to him,
 And left me here, ev’n in this stranger’s land,
 (For years of absence makes it so to me,)
 A disappointed, friendless, unknown man,
 Poor and depressed, such as you see me now.

BERNARD.

Double, detested, cruel-hearted villain !

COUNT ZATERLOO (*starting up with affected vehemence*).

By heaven he dies, as I do wear this arm !

(*they all start up.*)

Defended by a host of liv’ried knaves,
 I’d seek him out alone.

BERNARD.

Thou shalt not go alone ; here, heart and hand
 We will all join thee in so good a cause.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

My arm is at thy will.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Take my aid too ;

We never can be bold in better cause.

THIRD GENTLEMAN (*on receiving a sign from Zaterloo*).

Then, Sirs, you must be speedy with your vengeance,

For I am well inform'd that on to-morrow,
With all his treasure, for a distant province
He will begin his journey towards eve.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Ha ! then good fortune leads him to our hands ;
How goes he guarded ?

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

With a slender train.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Then thanks to fortune's fav'ring smiles, which
thus,

Whilst we but seek revenge for a friend's wrongs,
So kindly throws into our heedless way
The easy cure of our necessities.

Yes, let us seize the greedy gluttred villain !

Let us disgorge him of his ill-got gains !
He long enough has rioted in ease,
Whilst better men have felt the gripe of want.

BERNARD.

Yes, let it be so, let the villain die !

COUNT ZATERLOO.

What say'st thou, Rayner ? thou alone art silent.

RAYNER.

The wrongs are mine, and if with indignation
They fill your breasts, in strong desire of vengeance
Ye well may guess I am not far behind :
But there's a law above all human bonds,
Which damps the eager beating of my heart,
And says, " do thou no murder."

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Well, clear thy knitted brows, nor look thus
strangely.
We both are form'd, my friend, to know like feel-
ings,
Like wants and wishes, and from better days
Both are reduced to fortune's lowest ebb :
And I as well as thou, standing thus singly,
Can feed my fancy up with strong conceits
Of what in letter'd lore is virtue term'd,
And bear its darkest frowns. There was a time,
When sharing ev'ry wish and ev'ry view
With one of weaker frame and softer soul ;

Yet forced by the dark frowns of adverse fortune
 To live a willing outlaw from her presence,
 Because I could not bear to come before her
 A poor despised man, rest of that comeliness
 And honest grace which independence gives,
 To bid her throw aside her flowing robes
 And decent ornaments of maiden pride,
 Unveil the sweetness of her shelter'd beauty
 To beating mid-day heats and chilling winds,
 And be a wand'ring vagrant by my side;—
 There was a time, my friend, when, thus beset,
 At view of any means to better fortune,
 A stronger pow'r had ris'n within my breast
 And mock'd at law. But, standing thus alone,
 I can as well as thou forego the gain
 Which this occasion offers.—Let it pass!
 There is within us, be it superstition,
 Th' unscann'd opinions from our childhood cherish'd,
 Or natural instinct, still a strong aversion
 To ev'ry act of blood. Let us yield to it,
 We will not strain our nature from its bent:
 We'll do no violent deed.

RAYNER (*catching hold of Zaterloo with great agitation*).

O thou hast mov'd me! thou hast conjur'd
 thought!

Wert thou—Wert thou indeed thus circumstanc'd?
 And thy deserted love; what was her fate?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

She felt not long the cruel separation:

One lovely bush of the pale virgin thorn,
 Bent o'er a little heap of lowly turf,
 Is all the sad memorial of her worth ;
 All that remains to mark where she is laid.

RAYNER.

Oh ! Oh ! and was it thus !

COUNT ZATERLOO.

But let us now shake off these dismal thoughts,
 This hour was meant for social fellowship :
 Resume your seats, my friends, and, gentle Rayner,
 Clear up thy cloudy brows and take thy place.

RAYNER.

I fain would be excus'd.

COUNT ZATERLOO (*gently forcing him to sit down*).

Nay, no excuse :

Thou must perforce a social hour or two
 Spend with us. To ye all, my noble friends,
 I fill this cup. (*drinks.*)

——— Bernard, how goes thy suit ?

Hast thou yet to thy greedy Lawyer's pocket
 Convey'd thy hindmost ducat ? Ha, ha, ha !
 Had he, with arms in hand, ta'en from thee boldly
 Half of the sum, thou would'st have call'd him
 robber.

Ha, ha, ha ! (*laughing heartily.*)

BERNARD.

Yes, thou may'st laugh :

We nice distinctions make.—I had an uncle,
Who once upon a time ———

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I hope, good Bernard,
Thy story will be shorter than thy suit.

(Rayner, who has been sitting in gloomy thoughtfulness, without attending to anything around him, whilst Zaterloo has been keeping an eye of observation on him, now rises up in great agitation to go away.)

COUNT ZATERLOO.

What is the matter, Rayner?

RAYNER.

I am disturb'd—I know not how I am—
Let me take leave, I pray you.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Thou shalt not quit us thus. What is the matter?

RAYNER.

Question me not: my thoughts are all confus'd:
There is a strong temptation fasten'd on me.
I am not well.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(aside to Bernard)*.

Ay, now it works upon him:
This will do ———

(Aloud and preventing Rayner from going.)
If thou'rt unwell, art thou not with thy friends?

RAYNER.

If ye indeed are friends, not spirits enleagu'd
To force me to my ruin, let me go —
Let me go to my home.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

What, dost thou call a bare unfurnish'd chamber,
With griping Landlord clam'ring in thine ears
For what he knows thou canst not give, thy home?

RAYNER (*sighing deeply*).

I have no other.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Stay thou here with us :
In the next chamber thou shalt rest a while.
Lead him, my kind Sebastian, by the hand :
There is a sort of woman's kindliness
About thy nature which befits thee best
To be a sick man's friend. I'll follow you.

(*Exit Rayner, leaning on Sebastian, —turning
about to his friends triumphantly as they
go off.*)

I have secur'd my man. (*A voice heard without.*)
But hark ! a voice without ! It is my mother's.
Secure the lettic'd door. Plague on her kindness
To haunt me here ! I have forgot my promise.
(*To Bernard.*) Make fast the lettic'd door and
answer for me.

BERNARD (*after fastening a door of lettice work
through which the Countess is seen*).

Who's there ? what want ye ?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO (*without*).

I want my son : I pray you is he here ?

BERNARD.

He is not here.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO (*without*).

Nay, say not so, I think he is with you.
O tell him I have sat these three long hours,
Counting the weary beatings of the clock,
Which slowly portion'd out the promis'd time
That brought him not to bless me with his sight.
If he is well, why does he thus forget ?
And if he is not, as I fear he is not,
Tell me the worst, and let me be with him
To smooth his couch and raise his sickly head.

COUNT ZATERLOO (*aside to Bernard*).

Tell her it is unseemly for a mother
To run about like a new foolish wife.

BERNARD.

If you complain thus movingly, fair widow,
We shall believe you seek a second husband
In lieu of your good son ; and by my truth
It were a better errand.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

O base of thought, as most unblest of speech !
My son is not with you : it cannot be :
I did him wrong to seek him in such company.

BERNARD (*speaking loud after her as she
retires from the door.*)

Not far from hence, there is a nightly meeting
Of worthy, sober, well-disposed folks,
Who once a week do offer up their prayers
And chant most faintly hymns till morning dawn,
It is more likely you will find him there.

(*Omnes laughing.*)

COUNT ZATERLOO.

She's gone.

BERNARD.

Yes, yes ; come from thy hiding place.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Now what a most unreasonable woman !
Thinks she, thus ripen'd to these manly years,
That I must run whene'er my finger aches
To lean my silly head upon her lap ?
'Tis well I have no wife.

BERNARD.

Ay, so it is.

There is no pleasing those high legal dames
With endless claims upon a man's regard :
Heaven save us from them all !

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Well, this I drink to precious liberty :

He is a fool indeed who parts with that.

(A loud voice and bustling heard without.)

What's this comes next to plague us ?

BERNARD.

'Tis Mira's voice.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Hast thou not sent to say, that urgent bus'ness
Detains me from her banquet ?

BERNARD.

I have ; I sent to her a written message.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Keep fast the door and I will stand conceal'd.

*(Conceals himself, and Mira appears thro' the
latticed door.)*

MIRA *(without)*.

Where is Count Zaterloo ? Let me pass on.

BERNARD.

Affairs of greatest consequence detain him,

My beauteous Mira ; and I needs must say

'That now you may not pass.—

He's much concern'd : early upon the morrow

He will be with you.

MIRA.

Upon the morrow ! prate not thus to me !

He shall to-night go with me where I list,

Or never see my face again. To morrow!
 Open the door I say! this weakly barrier
 Shall not oppose my way.

(Beating violently against the door.)

COUNT ZATERLOO *(aside to Bernard)*.

Faith I believe we must e'en let her in,
 She may do some rash thing, if we persist.

*(Bernard unbolts the door; Zaterloo comes from
 his concealment; and enter Mira, superbly dress'd,
 and in a violent passion.)*

MIRA.

Is this the way you keep your promises?
 Is this your faith? is this your gallantry?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Mira, my gentle love, I pray thee hear me!
 I sent to tell thee bus'ness of great moment.

MIRA.

Yes, yes! I have receiv'd your scurvy message.
 And well I know that ev'ry paltry matter
 Is cause sufficient for neglecting me.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Thou know'st to be from thee is painful to me.

MIRA.

So it should seem, by taking so much care
 To comfort ye the while. *(pointing to the wine, &c.)*
 You do your bus'ness jovially, methinks,

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Thou art too warm : accuse me as thou wilt
Of aught but want of love.

MIRA.

O thou deceitful man ! I know thee well :
Thou talk'st of love and thou wouldst break my
heart.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Indeed I am to blame, my gentle love ;
Yet be not thus : in token of forgiveness
This friendly cup receive, and smile upon me.
(*Offering her a cup, which she dashes to the ground.*)

MIRA.

Off with thy hateful gifts ! nought from thy hands
Will I receive ; I scorn thy offering.
Ev'n the rich robe thou hast so often promis'd me :
Ay and so oft forgot, so I must call it,
I would now scorn, since thou dost slight my love.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Indeed, my Mira, thou shalt have that robe
Before two days be past : I swear to thee.
Then do not look so frowningly, my love ;
I know thou hast a soft relenting nature ;
Smile my forgiveness.

MIRA.

O thou provoking man ! thou know'st full well

It is thyself and not thy gifts I prize :
Thou know'st too well how my fond doating heart
Is moved with the soft witch'ry of thy tongue ;
Yet thou wilt vex me thus, and break my heart.
Oh ! 'tis too much ! (*pretending to burst into tears.*)

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I cannot see thee weep : what would'st thou
have ?

MIRA.

I will have nought, unless you go with me.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I cannot now, for I have urgent bus'ness.

MIRA.

Then stay, and never see my face again.
O that some friendly hand would end my days,
Since I have lived to see me thus despis'd.

COUNT ZATERLOO (*aside to Bernard*).

Bernard, I think I must e'en go with her.
See thou to Rayner : I will soon return.
(*Aloud.*) Then let us go, my love, thou dost com-
pel me.
Thy hand, sweet Mira. (*Exeunt Zaterloo and Mira.*)

BERNARD.

Well, gentle friends, it is blest liberty
Our noble chief enjoys. I must to Rayner.

Stay if you will, and keep ye merry here,
(Omnes.) No, we are tir'd, we will retire to rest,
(Exeunt.)

SCENE II. Rayner's Lodgings.

Enter RAYNER alone.

RAYNER.

Be still, ye idle thoughts that tofs me thus,
 Changing like restless waves, but ever dark;
 Or one of you above his fellows rise,
 And bear a steady rule. Adversity!
 Thou'lt come upon me like an ambush'd foe
 In armed strength. If I had mark'd thy course,
 I might have girt myself for thine approach,
 While distant still, and met thee like a man.
 But when new-fetter'd in a lover's bonds,
 And dazzled too with hope's deceitful brightness,
 Cam'st thou like a thick cloud of desert sand,
 And in dark night o'erwhelm'd me: deepest night,
 Thro' which no waking vision ever gleams,
 Save thy grim visage only, loathly want,
 In all thy varied forms of misery,
 My night, my day dreams, ah! how are ye changed,
 Since in the new-betroth'd, the lover's fancy,
 Ye wove your sheeny maze of mingled thoughts,
 Like sparkling dew-webs in the early Sun!

(after a pause.)

Elizabeth! methinks ev'n now I see her,
 As in the horrors of my last night's dream,
 When, after following her thro' flood and fire,

She turn'd to me, and her weak arms stretch'd forth.

But ah! how changed, how pale, and spent, and keen!

As if already blighting poverty,

That portion which her love must share with me,

Had marr'd—cease, cease, base thought, it shall not be!

(Enter Herman with a knapsack on his back, as if prepared for a journey.)

What, my good Herman, art thou so soon ready?

HERMAN.

Yes, my dear master, but if you think it too soon, I will not go to-day. Nay if it were not that you force me to go, I should as soon have thought of deserting my friend (pardon my boldness, sir) in a wild wood amongst savages, as leaving you here in this strange place in the state you are in at present. Pardon my boldness, sir.

RAYNER.

Thou hast no boldness to pardon, Herman: thou art well entitled to call thyself my friend; there is not one amongst those who have borne that name, who would have done more for me than thou hast done.

HERMAN.

Ah sir!

RAYNER *(assuming a look of cheerfulness)*.

Fy, do not look so sadly upon me, man; thanks

to thy good nurfing and the good broth thou haft made me, I am getting ftrong again : and as for the ftate of my coffers, for which thou fo much concerneft thyfelf, do not let that difturb thee. My tide of means is, to be fure, pretty well ebb'd juft now ; but fome wind or other will fpring up to fet it a flowing again. In the mean time thou knoweft I would travel alone : perhaps I may ramble about a little while myfterioufly, like the wandering Jew or fome of thofe lonely philofophers which thy old ftories tell thee about, and there is no knowing what I may find out to do me good. The philofopher's ftone, thou knoweft, may as well fall into my hands as thofe of any other wanderer, fo pray thee, man, dont look fo ruefully upon me.

HERMAN.

Ah, my dear mafter ! there is fomething here that hangs heavy on my heart, and fays, if I leave you now, fome evil will befall you : I befeech you let me ftay with you, I fhall find fomething to do in this town, and I can ———

RAYNER.

No, no, no ! Speak of this no more—we have argued this point already. And what is this which thou putteft down fo flyly upon the table ? (*taking up a little packet which Herman has put fecretly upon the table.*) Ha ! the jewels I have given thee in room of thy wages ! out upon it ! thou wilt make me angry with thee now, and it grieves me to be angry

with thee. Put it up, put it up : I command thee to do it ; and thou knowest I have not often used this stern word.

HERMAN.

O no, sir ! You have not indeed used it ; and I shall never meet with another master like you.

RAYNER.

Thou wilt meet, I hope, my dear Herman, with a far better master than I have been to thee, though not with one for whom thou wilt do so much kindly service as thou hast done for me ; and for this cause perhaps, thou wilt not love him so much. God prosper thee for it, wherever thou goest !—Take this embrace and blessing for all thou hast done for me. Farewel ! farewel ! thou must be gone now ; indeed thou must. God bless thee, my good Herman.

(Pushing Herman gently off the stage, who wipes his eyes and seems unwilling to go.)

Exit Herman.)

RAYNER *(alone)*.

Now am I left alone : there's no one near me
That e'er hath loved or cared for me. Methinks
I now can better look i'th' surly face
Mine alter'd state, and bear to be in want.
I am alone, and I am glad of it.
Alas ! chang'd heart of mine ! what is that state
Which gives to thee such thoughts ?—Elizabeth—
At it again ! This strong idea still !

I am distracted when I think of this,
 'Therefore I must not, if I would be honest.
 Those men—or are they men or are they devils?
 With whom I met last night; they've fasten'd on
 me.

Fell thoughts, which, tho' I spurn them, haunt me
 still.

Would I had never met them!
 Here comes my landlord with his surly face
 Of debts and claims, and ev'ry irksome thing.

(Enter Landlord with a letter.)

Good morrow, Landlord.

LANDLORD.

I thank you, sir; I am glad to hear you call me
 Landlord, for I began to be afraid you had mistaken
 me for your Host.

RAYNER.

I understand you well enough, and indeed I have
 proved your patience, or rather your impatience,
 much longer than I wished. You have a letter in
 your hand.

LANDLORD *(giving it)*.

There, Sir; if it bring you the news of any good
 luck, I shall be glad of it.

RAYNER *(agitated)*.

From Elizabeth.—Good morning—good morn-
 ing to you.

LANDLORD.

Read it, sir, and see if it bring you any good news ; it is time now to look for some change in your favour.

RAYNER.

I cannot open it whilst thou art here. Have the goodness at least not to stand so near me.

LANDLORD.

So I must not occupy a place in my own house, forsooth, for fear of offending the good folks who do me the honour to live in it. (*retires to the bottom of the stage muttering to himself.*)

RAYNER (*after opening the letter with great emotion and reading it*).

O what is this !——

Abandon'd by the friend with whom she liv'd,
And coming here to join me with all speed !

O God ! O God ! (*sinks down upon a chair in violent agitation.*)

LANDLORD. (*running up to him*).

What is the matter now ?

RAYNER.

Begone, begone ! I cannot answer thee.

Enter COUNT ZATERLOO.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Ha, Rayner! how is't with thee? thou look'st wildly.

(*To* Landlord.) Speak to me, friend: he heeds not what I say:

Has any new misfortune happen'd to him?

LANDLORD.

I fear there has, sir.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Rouse thee up, brave Rayner,
A friend is come to thee.

RAYNER (*starting up*).

Ha, is it thee?

Com'st thou upon me now, my tempter? now,
Ev'n in my very moment of distraction?

Thou know'st thy time: some fiend has whisper'd
to thee.

Ay, ay! say what thou wilt.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Thou'rt surely mad; I came not, on my word,
To say aught to thee which an honest ear
Might not receive; nor will I even speak,
Since it so moves thee —

RAYNER (*interrupting him eagerly*).

Ah, but thou must!

Thou must speak that, which, in its darkest hour,
Push'd to extremity, 'midst ringing dizziness
The ear of desperation doth receive,
And I must listen to it.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

What, say'st thou so? 'Tis well (*aside*), but be
more prudent,

We are o'erheard. (*looking suspiciously to Landlord,
who has retired a few paces behind.*)

Come with me to my lodgings;
There wait my friends; all things shall be concerted:
Come with me instantly; the time is precious.

RAYNER (*in a tone of despair, clasping his hands
vehemently*).

Ay, ay! I'll go with thee.

(*Exeunt Count Zaterloo and Rayner:*
Manet Landlord.)

LANDLORD (*coming forward*).

What's this I've overheard? Is this devil now
going to tempt the poor distressed young man to do
some foul deed in his necessity?—I have tempted
him too, with my hard-hearted murmuring about
the few wretched pounds that he owes me. I'll
run after him and say, I don't care whether he pay
me or not. (*running to the door and then stopping*

short.) No, no ! softly, softly ! I dare say it is only some sharpening business they have got on hand, such as needy Gentlemen are sometimes forced to follow : I have got my conscience newly cleared off at confession last week, and I am to make an offering next holy-day to the shrine of our patron St. Bernard ; this is no time, goodsooth, to lose such a sum upon scruples. *(Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A wood : dark night, with a pale gleam of distant lightning seen once or twice on the edge of the horizon. Advancing by the bottom of the stage, a few moving lights, as if from lanthorns, are seen, and at the same time several signal calls and loud whistles are heard, with the distant answer returned to them from another part of the wood : Enter Count Zaterloo, Rayner, Sebastian, and others of the band, armed, and a few of them bearing in their hands dark lanthorns. It is particularly requested if this play should ever be acted, that no light may be permitted upon the stage but that which proceeds from the lanthorns only.*

COUNT ZATERLOO (*to Sebastian*).

They must be near : didst thou not hear their call ?

SEBASTIAN.

Methought I did ; but who in this wild wood
May credit give to either eye or ear ?
How oft we've been deceiv'd with our own voices,
From rocky precipice or hollow cave,
'Midst the confused sound of rustling leaves,
And creaking boughs, and cries of nightly birds,
Returning seeming answer !

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Rayner, where standest thou ?

RAYNER.

Here, on thy left.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Surely these wild scenes have depriv'd thy tongue
Of speech. Let's hear thy voice's found, good man,
To say thou art alive. Thou'rt marvellous silent:
Didst thou not also hear them?

RAYNER.

I know not truly if I did. Around me,
All seems like the dark mingled mimicry
Of fev'rish sleep; in which the half-doubting mind,
Wilder'd and weary, with a deep-drawn breath,
Says to itself, "Shall I not wake?"

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Fy, man!

Wilt thou not keep thy foldier's spirit up?
To-morrow's fun will be thy waking time,
And thou wilt wake a rich man and a free.

RAYNER.

My waking time!—no, no! I must sleep on,
And have no waking.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Ha! does thy mind misgive thee on the brink?

RAYNER.

What passes in my mind, to thee is nothing,

If my hand do the work that's fasten'd on me.
Let's pass to it as quickly as thou wilt,
And do not speak to me. —

Enter Bernard and others, armed, &c.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Well met, my friends! well met! for we
despair'd
Of ever seeing you.

SEBASTIAN.

Yet we have heard your voices many times,
Now calling us on this side, now on that,
As tho' you had from place to place still skipp'd,
Like Will o'the Wisp, to lose us on our way.

BERNARD.

We've far'd alike: so have we thought of you.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Have you discover'd aught of those we seek?

BERNARD.

No; all is still, as far as we have travers'd:
No gleaming torch gives notice from afar,
Nor trampling hoofs found on the distant road.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Then must we take again our sev'ral routs,
That haply we may learn, ere he approach,

What strength we have to face, and how he travels :
 And that we may not wander thus again,
 This aged oak shall be our meeting place ;
 Where having join'd, we'll by a shorter compass
 Attack them near the centre of the wood.

SEBASTIAN.

The night grows wond'rous dark : deep-swellings
 - gusts
 And sultry stillness take the rule by turns ;
 Whilst o'er our heads the black and heavy clouds
 Roll slowly on. This surely bodes a storm.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I hope the devil will raise no tempest now,
 To save this child of his, and from his journey
 Make him turn back, crossing our fortunes.

BERNARD.

Fear not !
 For, be the tempest of the devil's raising,
 It will do thee no harm. To his good favour
 Thou hast (wrong not thy merit) claims too strong.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Then come on, friends, and I shall be your
 warrant !
 Growl sky and earth and air, ne'er trouble ye ;
 They are secure who have a friend at court.

SCENE II. *A different part of the wood, wild and savage : the Scene still darken'd, and a storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied with hail.*

Enter RAYNER.

RAYNER.

I know not where these men have shelter'd them.
 I've mis'd their signal : this loud stunning din
 Devours all other sounds. Where shall I go?
 Athwart this arch of deep embodied darkness,
 Swift shiv'ring lightnings glare, from end to end
 Mantling the welkin o'er in vivid flames ;
 Or from aloft, like sheeted cataracts
 Of liquid fire, seem pour'd. Ev'n o'er my head
 The soft and misty-textur'd clouds seem chang'd
 To piles of harden'd rocks, which from their base,
 Like the up-breaking of a ruin'd world,
 Are hurl'd with force tremendous. Patt'ring hail
 Beats on my shivering form with spiteful pith :
 Where shall I shelter me ? Ha ! thro' the trees
 Peers, near at hand, a small but settled light :
 I will make quickly towards it ; perhaps
 There may be some lone dwelling in the wood.

(Exit.

SCENE III. *The inside of a cave : an Old man discover'd sitting by a small table made of coarse planks, with a lamp burning dimly upon it : the thunder heard still very loud.*

OLD MAN.

Doth angry heav'n still roll its loudest peal

O'er th' unblest head! Ay, thro' its deaf'ning roar
 I hear the blood-avenging Spirit's voice,
 And, as each furious turmoil spends its strength,
 Still sounds upon the far-receding storm
 Their distant growl.

'Tis hell that sends its fire and devils up
 To lord it in the air. The very wind,
 Rising in fitful eddies, horribly sounds,
 Like bursts of damn'd howlings from beneath.
 Is this a storm of nature's elements?
 O, no, no, no! the blood-avenging spirits
 Ride on the madding clouds: there is no place,
 Not in the wildest den, wherein may rest
 The unblest head. (*Knocking heard without.*)

—— Ha! knocking at my door!

(*Pauses and listens much alarmed: knocking
 heard still louder.*)

Say, who art thou that knock'st so furiously?
 Think'st thou the clouds are sparing of their din,
 That thou must thunder too? Say who thou art,
 And what thou would'st at such an hour as this,
 In such a place?

RAYNER (*without*).

I am a lone, and tempest-beaten traveller,
 Who humbly begs a shelter from the night.

OLD MAN.

Then art thou come where guest yet never
 enter'd.

RAYNER (*without*).

I do not ask admittance as a guest.
Would'st thou not save a creature from destruction,
Ev'n a dumb animal? unbar the door,
And let me lay my body under shelter.

(*Old man makes no answer; the storm heard
very loud.*)

RAYNER (*without*).

If thou'rt a man in nature as in voice,
Thou canst not sit at peace beneath thy roof,
And shut a stranger out to the rude night.
I would, so circumstanced, have shelter'd thee.

OLD MAN.

He tries to move me with a soothing voice.

(*Aside.*)

(*Aloud.*) Thou art a knave; I will not let thee in.

RAYNER (*without*).

Belike I am, yet do not fear my wiles :
All men are honest in a night like this.

OLD MAN.

Then I will let thee in : whoe'er thou art,
Thou hast some sense, shouldst thou lack better
things. (*He unbars a small door, and Rayner
enters much ruffled and exhausted by the
storm and without his hat.*)

RAYNER.

I'm much beholden to thee.

OLD MAN.

No, thou art not.

RAYNER.

The violence of the night must plead my pardon,
For breaking thus unask'd upon your rest.
But wand'ring from my way, I know not how,
And losing my companions of the road,
Deep in the 'tangled wood the storm o'ertook me;
When spying thro' the trees this glimm'ring lamp,
And judging it, as now it doth appear,
The mid-night taper of some holy man,
Such as do oft in dreary wilds like this
Hold their abode, I ventur'd onwards.

(Old Man, *offering him bread and dried fruits.*)

OLD MAN.

Perhaps thou'rt hungry.

RAYNER.

I thank you gratefully.

OLD MAN.

There is no need.
Fall to, if thou hast any mind to it.

RAYNER.

I thank you truly, but I am not hungry.

OLD MAN.

Perhaps thou'rt dainty: I've naught else to give
thee,

RAYNER.

I should despise myself, if any food
Could bear such value in my estimation,
As that it should to me a straw's worth seem,
To feed on homeliest, or on richest fare.

OLD MAN.

So much the better. (*They sit down.*)

RAYNER.

If I may guess from all I see around me,
The luxuries and follies of the world
Have long been banish'd here.

(*Old Man looks sternly at Rayner, who looks fixedly upon him again, and both remain for some time silent.*)

OLD MAN.

Why look'st thou so?
What is there in my face that thou would'st scan?
I'm old and live alone: what would'st thou know?

RAYNER.

I crave your pardon, and repress all wishes
That may disturb you.

OLD MAN.

The night wears on, let us both go to rest.

RAYNER.

I thank you, for in truth I'm very tir'd.

OLD MAN (*pointing to his couch*).

There is thy place.

RAYNER.

Nay, I am young; the ground shall be my couch.
I will not take your bed.

(*Old Man then gives Rayner a cloak, which he wraps about him, laying himself down in a corner of the cave. The storm now heard at a distance. After walking up and down for some time, the Old Man goes close up to Rayner, who appears asleep, and looks earnestly upon him; Rayner opening his eyes seems surprised.*)

OLD MAN.

Be not afraid, I will not cut thy throat.

RAYNER (*starting half up from the ground*).

Nay, heaven such deed forbend! I fear thee not:
I can defend myself. (*Grasping his sword.*)

OLD MAN.

Be not offended; but methought thy looks
Did seem as tho' thou wert afraid of me.
Rest thou in peace—rest thou in peace, young
man:

I would not do thee harm for many worlds.

(*Rayner goes to rest again, still keeping his drawn sword in his hand. The Old Man goes to rest likewise, but shortly after starts from his couch in great agitation.*)

OLD MAN.

It is mine hour of horror : 'tis upon me !
 I hear th' approaching sound of feet unearthly :
 I feel the pent-up vapour's chilly breath
 Burst from the yawning vault :—It is at hand.

(Turning towards the door as if he saw some one enter.)

Ha ! com'st thou still in white and sheeted weeds,
 With hand thus pointing to thy bloody side ?
 Thy grave is deep enough in hallow'd ground !
 Why com'st thou ever on my midnight rest ?
 What dost thou want ? If thou hast power, as
 seeming,
 Stretch forth thine arm and take my life ; then free
 From fleshy fears, in nature as thyself,
 I'll follow thee to hell, and there abide
 The searing flames : but here, upon this earth,
 Is placed between the living and the dead
 An awful mystery of separation,
 Which makes their meeting frightful and unhallow'd.

(In the vehemence of his agitation he throws out his arm and strikes it against Rayner, who alarmed at his ravings has left his resting-place, and stolen softly behind him.)

Ha ! what art thou ? *(starting and turning round to Rayner.)*

RAYNER.

Nay, thou with bristling locks, loose knocking
 joints

And fixed eyeballs starting in their sockets,
 Who speak't thus wildly to the vacant space,
 Say rather, what art thou.

OLD MAN.

I am a murderer. (*Rayner starts back from him
 and drops his sword.*)

Ah ! wherefore dost thou stare so strangely on me ?
 There's no blood on me now ! 'tis long since past.
 Hast thou thyself no crime, that thus from me
 Thou dost in horror shrink ?

RAYNER.

Most miserable man !

OLD MAN.

Thou truly say'st, for I am miserable.

RAYNER.

And what am I ? (*After a disturbed pause.*)
 The storm did rage and bellow thro' the air,
 And the red lightning shiver'd :
 No traveller would venture on his way
 In such a night.—O, blessed, blessed storm !
 For yet it hath not been, and shall be never.
 Most Great and Merciful ! sav'd from this gulf,
 May I to thee look up ?—No : in the dust—
 (*As he bows himself to the earth, and is about to
 kneel, the report of fire-arms is heard without,
 and he starts up again.*)
 'Tis done !—O, it is done !—the horrible act !
 (*Exit, beating his forehead violently.*)

OLD MAN.

What may this be ? some band of nightly robbers
 Is near my cave, committing violent deeds.
 Thy light, weak flame, shall not again betray me,
 And lure unwelcome visitors. (*Puts out the lamp;
 and after a dark pause, enter Count Zaterloo
 supporting himself on First Gentleman, who
 bears a dark lantern, which he sets down on
 the ground, and fastens the door of the cave
 carefully behind them.*)

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I am wounded grievously : who would have
 thought
 Of such a powerful guard of armed men
 Attending on his journey. He is slain :
 Did'st thou not see him fall ?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yes ; we have kill'd our bird, but lost the eggs.
 Fortune has play'd us false, yet we've escap'd :
 Here we may rest ; this cave is tenanted
 With some lone being whom we may controul,
 And take possession—— (*discovering Old Man.*)
 —— Something living here !
 What art thou ?

OLD MAN.

I am a thing no better than yourselves.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

The better then for thee that thou art so.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Conduct me onward : I perceive an opening
Which leads, I guess, to some more close recess :
Lay me down there for I am very faint.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I will obey thee,—Come thou too, old man ;
Not from my sight one moment must thou budge.
Come on : for, mark me well, should'st thou betray
us,

Tho' fetter'd down with chains in grated dungeons,
Our arms were long enough to reach to thee.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV. *Another part of the wood ; at a distance, on the back ground, are discovered two men watching a dead body by the light of a torch stuck between the boughs of a tree ; the stage otherwise perfectly dark.*

Enter GOBUS on the front of the stage.

GOBUS.

I fear they will all escape from us amongst these
'tangled paths and vile perplexing thickets. A man
cannot get on half a dozen paces here but some
curfed clawing thing catches hold of him, and
when he turns round to collar his enemy, with a
good hearty curse in his mouth, it is nothing but a

thorn-bush or a briar after all. A plague upon't !
I'll run no more after them if they should never be
taken.—Who's there ?

Enter a COMPANION.

COMPANION.

What, are you here, Gobus ? I thought you
had been in search of the robbers.

GOBUS.

So I was ; but what does it signify ? they have all
got the start of us now, and we can scarcely ex-
pect they will have the civility to wait till we come
up with them.

COMPANION.

Ay, Ay, Gobus, that is a lazy man's argument.
Why, there was one of them seen by Bertram not
five minutes since, with his head uncovered, stalk-
ing strangely amongst the trees like a madman, and
he vows he will follow the scent through every path
of the wood but he will have him, either alive or
dead.

GOBUS.

But if he be a young stout robber, he may knock
Bertram on the head in the mean time, and relieve
him from the obligation of keeping his vow.

COMPANION.

Never fear that : his bugle-horn is by his side,
and as soon as he comes up with him he will give

E.

his companions notice, and they will run to his assistance.

GOBUS.

Well, well, let them manage it the best way they can, and let us join our friends yonder, who keep watch by the body; there is good store of dried sticks in that corner, we may make a fire and warm ourselves till they return.

(Horn heard without.)

COMPANION.

Ha! there is the signal, and close at hand too. He has caught his man and wants assistance; let us run to him, or the villain will escape.

(Exeunt Companion and Gobus, who follows rather unwillingly, whilst the men who were watching the body run eagerly to the front of the stage.)

FIRST MAN.

It founded to the right hand of us; let us strike into this path.

(Horn sounds again.)

SECOND MAN.

Ay, there it sounds again; it is to this hand of us, but it is so dark there is no finding our way.

FIRST MAN.

We have been so long by the torch-light that the darkness is darker to us: run back and

fetch the light with thee. (*Several other attendants from different parts of the wood run across the stage, calling to one another with great eagerness, whilst the Second Man running back again to the bottom of the stage, snatches the torch from the tree, and comes forward with it.*)

Enter BERTRAM, GOBUS, and others, with Rayner as their prisoner.)

GOBUS (*speaking as they enter*).

Here is light! here is light, friends! bring him near it, I pray you, that we may see what kind of a fish we have caught in our net. Ay, just as I said now, as hang'd a looking villain as ever scowl'd thro' the grates of a dungeon. See what a wild murderous look he has with his eyes! this is the very man that did the deed I warrant ye. Let us pull the cords faster round his arms tho': if he get one of his mischievous hands loose again, there is no knowing which of our brains he may knock out first.

FIRST MAN.

It will never be thine, I am sure, thou'rt always safe when the knocking out of brains is going on.

GOBUS.

As I'm a sinner he'll get one of his hands loose if we do not take care of him. (*Attempting to tighten the cords round Rayner's arms.*)

BERTRAM (*putting him away with indignation*).

For shame, man, he is bound tight enough ; I will not suffer thee to lay a finger upon him : and as for the hang'd face thou talk'st of, alack a day ! it goes to my heart to see him, such a goodly-looking gentleman, for such I'll be sworn he is.

GOBUS.

Ay, no doubt ! it is ever thus with thee. Thou did'st never in thy life see a thief go to the gallows without crying out, " alack a day ! what a fine looking fellow it is !" Ay, and if he could but make shift to howl out half a verse of a psalm along with his father confessor, thou wert sure to knotch him down upon thy holiday tables as one of the new made saints. Ay, there be no such great saints now-a-days as those who pass, with the help of a Dominican, thro' the hangman's hands to the other world ; he beats your pope and your cardinals all to nothing in smuggling a sinner cleverly in by the back door to heaven.

BERTRAM.

So much the better for thee ; it is the only chance thou hast of ever getting there.—Stand off, I say (*pushing Gobus away*), and do not stare thus upon the prisoner ! art thou not asham'd to stare in an unhappy man's face after this fashion ? we don't know what hard fate may have brought him into these circumstances (*to the attendants*). Move on : we are losing time here.

GOBUS.

What, will you not pinion him more closely?

BERTRAM.

No, beast! I would rather flea the skin off that fool's back of thine than gall a hair's breadth of his body *in a softened voice to Rayner*). Speak, Sir; if the rope hurts your arms; we will not use you cruelly.

RAYNER.

What did'st thou say to me? was there kindness in thy voice?

BERTRAM.

Yes, Sir, there was kindness in it. Do the ropes hurt your arms? if they do we will loosen them a little.

RAYNER.

I wist not that my arms were bound: but if thou hast any kindness in thee, give me a drink of water when thou can'st get it, for my mouth is very parched.

BERTRAM.

Yes, Sir, that you shall not want, tho' I should pay gold for it.—Move on, comrades: the night is far advanced, and we must guard the prisoner and the dead body of our master back to the city before the morning break.

(Exeunt.)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

*A spacious court with a magnificent building in front :
a great concourse of people are discovered as if
waiting in expectation of some sight.*

FIRST CROWD.

THE court is marvellously long of breaking up ;
I'm tir'd of waiting ; and yet I don't like to lose
the sight, after having stay'd so long for it.

SECOND CROWD.

I fear it will go hard with the young man.

THIRD CROWD.

I fear it will, poor gentleman !

WOMAN CROWD.

Ah ! poor young man ! it is an awful end.

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, I remember well the last criminal that was
condemned here ; a strong-built man he was, tho'
somewhat up in years. O, how pale he look'd as
they led him out from court ! I think I stood upon
this very spot as he pass'd by me ; and the fixed

strong look of his features too—It was a piteous sight!

THIRD CROWD.

Ah, man! but that was nothing to the execution. I paid half a dollar for a place near the scaffold; and it would have made any body's heart drop blood to have seen him when he lifted up the handkerchief from his eyes, and took his last look of the day-light, and all the living creatures about him.

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, man, that a human creature should be thus thrust out of the world by human creatures like himself; it is a piteous thing!

(Enter a man from the court.)

OMNES *(eagerly)*.

What news? what news of the prisoner?

MAN,

He has just finished his defence, in which he has acquitted himself so nobly, setting off his words too with such a manly grace, that it is thought by every body he will be set free.

SECOND CROWD.

Indeed! I should not have expected this now; spoke so nobly say'st thou?

FIRST CROWD.

Yes, yes, noble blood makes noble speaking.

WOMAN CROWD.

Well, and is it not best so? poor young man!
I'm sure I'm glad of it.

FIRST CROWD.

And an't I so too, milk-fac'd doll! tho' I hate
to be kept so long staring for nothing. I wonder
what brought me here in a murrain to it!

SECOND WOMAN.

La! then we shan't see him pass by with the
chains upon his legs.

FIRST CROWD.

No, no! nor nothing at all. Come let me pass,
I have been too long here. (*Pressing through the
crowd to get out.*)

WOMAN CROWD.

O, you tread upon my toes!

FIRST CROWD.

Devil take you and your toes both! can't you
keep them out of people's way then!

WOMAN CROWD.

Plague take it! what had we all to do to come
here like so many fools!

(*Enter a second Man from the court.*)

SECOND CROWD.

Here comes another man from the court (*calling
to the man*). Ho, friend! is he acquitted yet?

SECOND MAN.

Nor, nor like to be; the judge is just about to pronounce sentence upon him, but something came so cold over my heart I could not stay to hear it.

(Several of the mob climb eagerly up upon the walls of the building, and look in at the windows.)

CROWD *(below)*.

What do you see there, firs!

CROWD *(above)*.

The judge is just risen from his seat, and the black signal is lifted up.

OMNES.

Hush! hush! and let us listen! *(A deep pause.)*

CROWD *(above)*.

Sentence is past now.

CROWD *(below)*.

God have mercy on him!

THIRD CROWD.

I would not wear my head upon his shoulders for all the prince's coffers.

FIRST CROWD.

Alas! poor man! he is but a youth.

SECOND CROWD.

Yet he must be cut off in the flower of his days.

FIRST CROWD.

It is an awful thing!

WOMAN CROWD.

Ah! but, a youth, and a goodly-looking youth too, I warrant ye.

SECOND WOMAN.

Alack a-day! many a one falls into crimes, but all do not pay the forfeit.

THIRD CROWD.

Ha! who comes this way so fair and so gentle in her mein; thus tofs'd and 'tangled amidst the pressing crowd, like a stalk of wild flower in a bed of nettles? Come, clear the way there, and let the lady pass.

Enter ELIZABETH attended by RICHARD, the crowd making way for her.

ELIZABETH.

I'm much obliged to you.

RICHARD.

We thank you, good Sirs! My mistress and I are both strangers in this town, and the nearest way to your best inn, as we are told, is thro' this

court ; but the crowd is so great I think we had better turn back again.

ELIZABETH.

What is the meaning of this eager multitude,
So gather'd round the entry to this palace ?

THIRD CROWD.

It is no palace, madam, but a public court : there is a gentleman of noble birth who is just now condemned to death for murder, and we are waiting to see him led forth from his trial ; you had better stop a little while and see the sight too.

ELIZABETH.

O, no ! I'm come here in an evil hour !—A gentleman of noble birth—Alas ! but that the crime is murder 'twere most piteous.

OMNES (*cagerly*).

There he comes ! see, see ! there he comes !

Enter RAYNER, fettered and guarded from the court, followed by BERTRAM and others, and advances slowly towards the front of the stage, the crowd opening and making a lane for him on every side.

FIRST CROWD.

What a noble gait he has even in his shackles !

SECOND CROWD.

Oh ! oh ! that such a man should come to this !

ELIZABETH (*after gazing eagerly at the distant prisoner*).

Merciful heaven ! the form has strong resemblance.

RICHARD.

Sweet mistress, be not terrified with forms;
'Tis but a distant form.

ELIZABETH.

Ha! then it strikes thee too!—Merciful God!

RICHARD.

Patience, dear madam! now as he advances,
We shall be certified of the deception.
Rayner is not so tall as this young man,
Nor of a make so slender; no, nor yet——

ELIZABETH.

Peace, peace! for he advances. (*Watching the prisoner as he advances with a countenance of distracted eagerness, till he comes near her; then, uttering a loud shriek, falls down, and is supported by Richard and several of the crowd.*)

OFFICER (*conducting Rayner*).

What fainting maid is this obstructs the way?
Let not the crowd so closely press around her.
Open the way, and let the pris'ner pass.

RAYNER (*upon the crowd opening and discovering Elizabeth*).

O, sight of misery! my Elizabeth!
The last and fellest stroke of angry heaven
Falls on this cursed head,

OFFICER.

What may this mean ? let us pass on : we stop not
Whate'er betide.

RAYNER.

Nay, but you do : for here there is a power
Stronger than law or judgment. Give me way :
It is permitted me by ev'ry sense
Of human sympathy, were I ev'n bound
With chains tenfold enlock'd. *(Bending over
Elizabeth.)*

Thou loveliest, and thou dearest ! O thou part
Of my most inmost self ! art thou thus stricken ?
Falls this stroke on thee ? *(Kneeling down and en-
deavouring to support her, but finding himself
prevented by his chain.)*

Is there not strength in the soul's agony
To burst e'en bands of iron. *(Trying furiously to
burst his fetters, but cannot ; then with a sub-
dued voice)*

Am I indeed a base condemned wretch,
Cut off from ev'ry claim and tie of nature ?
(Turning to the officer.)

Thou who dost wear the law's authority,
May it not be permitted for the love
Of piteous charity ?—Shall strangers' hands
Whilst I am thus—O, do not let it be !

OFFICER.

No, no ! move on : it cannot be permitted.

RAYNER (*fiercely roused*).

What, say'st thou so? (*Turning to the crowd.*)

————— Ye who surround me too,
Each with the form and countenance of a man,
Say ye 'tis not permitted?
To you I do stretch forth these fetter'd hands,
And call you men: O, let me not miscall you!

VOICES FROM THE CROWD.

Fie, on't! unbind his hands, unbind his hands,
And we will stand his sureties.

BERTRAM *stepping forward in a supplicating posture
to the officer*).

Do but unbind his hands a little space,
And shoot me thro' the head if he escape.
My arm secured him; be my recompense
This one request.

OFFICER (*to Bertram*).

Go to; thou art a brave man but a weak one.
(*To the guard*) Move on: we halt no longer.

CROWD.

By all good saints we stand by the brave Bertram,
And he shall be unshackled. (*Menacingly.*)

OFFICER.

Soldiers, present your muskets to these madmen,
And let *them* speak; the pris'ner halts no longer;
Move on. (*A tumult between the crowd and the
guard, and Rayner is forced off the stage by
the soldiers.*)

FIRST CROWD.

Shame light on such hard-hearted cruelty !

SECOND CROWD.

If there had been but six of us with arms in our hands he durst not have put this affront upon us.

THIRD CROWD.

But who looks to the lady ? She is amongst strangers it seems, and has only this poor old man to take care of her.

OMNES.

We will take care of her then ; we will take care of her : ay, and she shall be waited upon like an empress.

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, so she shall, let the cost be what it will. I am only a poor cobbler, God knows, yet I will pawn the last awl in my stall but she shall be waited upon like an empress. See ! see ! she begins to revive again.

ELIZABETH (*opening her eyes with a heavy sigh*).

Is it all vanish'd ? 'twas a dreadful vision !

(*Looking on the crowd around her.*)

O, no ! the crowd is here still—it is real ;
And he is led away—horrible ! horrible !

(*Faints again, and is carried off the stage by Richard and the crowd.*)

SCENE II. *A square court, surrounded on all sides by the gloomy walls of a prison, the windows of which are narrow and grated, and the heads of one or two of the prisoners seen looking ruefully through the grates.*

Enter HARDIBRAND, and looks round him for some time without speaking.

HARDIBRAND.

Gloomy enough, gloomy enough in faith !
 Ah ! what a wond'rous mass of dreary walls,
 Whose frowning sides are reft in narrow slips
 As I have seen full oft some sea-worn cliff,
 Pierc'd with the murky holes of savage birds.
 Ah ! here the birds within are clipt o' wing,
 And cannot fly away.

(Enter Ohio with a tankard in his hand, crossing the stage.)

Holla, my friend ! I pray thee not so fast ;
 Inform me, if thou canst, where I may find
 The keeper of the prison.

OHIO.

Know you what prince you speak to ? saucy
 knave !
 I'll have thee scorch'd and flead, and piece-meal
 torn,
 If thou dost call me friend.

HARDIBRAND.

Good words at least ; I meant thee no offence.
 I see thou hast a tankard in thy hand,

And will not question thy high dignity.
Softly ; here's money for thee. (*Giving him money.*)

OHIO.

Silver pieces !

He ! he ! he ! he ! hast thou got more of them ?

HARDIBRAND.

Nay, thou art greedy ; answer first my question ;
Tell me at which of all these gloomy doors
I needs must knock to find out the chief jailor.
Thou look'st like some fetch-carry to the prisoners ;
Dost understand me ?

OHIO.

Ay, there's the place, go knock at yonder door.

HARDIBRAND (*after knocking*).

This door is close nail'd up, and cannot open.

OHIO (*grinning maliciously, and pointing to another door.*)

No, thou art wrong ; it is the door hard by,
With those black portals. (*Hardibrand knocks at
the other door.*)

Knock a little louder.

HARDIBRAND (*after knocking some time*).

A plague upon't ! there is no one within.

OHIO (*still grinning maliciously*).

No, thou art wrong again, it is not there ;
It is that door upon the other side.

(*Pointing to the opposite wall.*)

HARDIBRAND.

What, dost thou jest with me, malicious varlet
I'll beat thee if thou tell'st me false again.

OHIO.

Negroes be very stupid, master friend.

Enter the KEEPER of the Prison.

KEEPER (*to Ohio*).

Thou canker-worm ! thou black-envenom'd toad !
Art thou a playing thy malicious tricks ?
Get from my sight, thou pitchy viper, go !
(*Exit Ohio.*)

HARDIBRAND.

What black thing is it ? it appears, methinks,
Not worth thine anger.

KEEPER.

That man, may't please you, Sir, was born a prince.

HARDIBRAND.

I do not catch thy jest.

KEEPER.

I do not jest, I speak in sober earnest ;
He is an Afric prince of royal line.

HARDIBRAND.

What say'st thou ! that poor wretch who sneaketh
yonder
Upon those two black shanks ? (*Pointing off the stage.*)

KEEPER.

Yes, even he :
When but a youth, stol'n from his noble parents,
He for a slave was sold, and many hardships
By sea and land hath pass'd.

HARDIBRAND.

And now to be the base thing that he is !
Well, well, proceed.

KEEPER.

At last a surly master brought him here,
Who, thinking him unfit for further service,
As then a fest'ring wound wore hard upon him,
With but a scanty sum to bury him,
Left him with me. He ne'ertheless, recover'd ;
And tho' full proud and fullen at the first,
Tam'd by the love of wine which strongly tempts
him,
He by degrees forgot his princely pride,

And has been long established in these walls
 To carry liquor for the prisoners.
 But such a cursed, spite-envenom'd toad !——

HARDIBRAND.

Out on't ! thou'lt told a tale that wrings my
 heart

Of royal line ; born to command, and dignified
 By sufferings and dangers past, which makes
 The meanest man ennobled : yet behold him ;
(Pointing off the stage.)

How by the wall he sidelong straddles on
 With his base tankard !—O, the sneaking varlet !
 It makes me weep to hear his piteous tale,
 Yet my blood boils to run and cudgel him.
 But let us on our way.

KEEPER.

You are a noble stranger, as I guess,
 And wish to be conducted thro' the prison.
 It is an ancient building of great strength,
 And many strangers visit it.

HARDIBRAND.

It is indeed a place of ancient note.
 Have you at present many criminals
 Within these walls ?

KEEPER.

Our number is, thank God ! respectable,
 Though not what it has been in better days.

HARDIBRAND.

In better days !—Well, do thou lead the way.

(As they are about to go off the stage, they are stopped by a voice singing from one of the highest windows.)

SONG.

*Sweetly dawns the early day,
Rise, my love, and come away:
Leave thy grim and grated tower,
Bounding walls, and step-dame's lower;
'Don thy weeds and come with me,
Light and happy are the free.*

*No fair mansion hails me lord,
Dainties smoke not on my board;
Yet full careless by my side,
Shalt thou range the forest wide;
Tho' finer far the rich may be,
Light and happy are the free.*

HARDIBRAND.

Alas, poor soul ! I would that thou wert free !
What weary thrall is this that sings so sweetly ?

KEEPER.

A restless, daring outlaw ;
A fellow who hath aw'd the country round,
And levied contributions like a king,

To feast his jolly mates in wood and wild ;
 Yea, been the very arbiter of fortune,
 And as his freakish humors bit, hath lifted
 At one broad sweep the churl's fav'd store to
 leave it
 In the poor lab'rer's cot, whose hard-worn palm
 Had never chuck'd a ducat 'gainst its fellow.

HARDIBRAND.

'Tis a brave heart ! has he been long confined ?
 But lift ! he sings again.

SONG.

*Light on the hanging bough we'll swing,
 Or range the thicket cool,
 Or sit upon the bank and sing,
 Or bathe us in the pool.*

HARDIBRAND.

Poor pent up wretch ! thy soul roves far from
 home.

SONG.

*Well, good-man time, or blunt or keen,
 Move thee slow or take thy leisure,
 Longest day will bring its e'en,
 Weary lives but run a measure.*

HARDIBRAND.

'Tis even so, brave heart, or blunt or keen,
 Thy measure has its stint.

Enter BERTRAM from one of the doors of the prison.

I think thou hast the air of an old foldier :

(To Bertram as he is hurrying past him.)

Such, without greeting, never pass me by.

Ha, Bertram ! is it thee ?

BERTRAM.

What, mine old General ?

HARDIBRAND.

Yes, and mine old foldier.

How dost thou, man ? how has it far'd with thee

Since thou hast left the service ?

BERTRAM.

I thank your honour ; much as others find it ;
I have no cause to grumble at my lot.

HARDIBRAND.

'Tis well, but what's the matter with thee now ?
Thine eyes are red with weeping, and thy face
Looks ruefully.

BERTRAM.

I've been to visit, here, a noble youth,
Who is condemn'd to die.

HARDIBRAND.

A noble youth !

BERTRAM.

Yea, a foldier too.

HARDIBRAND.

A foldier !

BERTRAM.

Ay, your honour, and the Son
Of a most gallant foldier.

HARDIBRAND.

But he is innocent ?

BERTRAM.

He is condemn'd.

HARDIBRAND.

Shame on it ! were he twenty times condemn'd,
He's innocent as are these silver'd locks.

(Laying his hand vehemently on his head.)

What is his name ?

BERTRAM.

Rayner.

HARDIBRAND.

Ha ! son to my old comrade, Rayner !
Out on the fools ! I would as soon believe
That this right hand of mine had pilfer'd gold

As Rayner's son had done a deed of shame.
Come, lead me back with thee, for I must see him.

BERTRAM.

Heav'n bless your honour ! O, if by your means
He might have grace !

HARDIBRAND.

Come, let us go to him.

BERTRAM.

Not now, an' please you : he is now engaged
With one most dear to him. But an hour hence
I will conduct you to his cell.

HARDIBRAND.

So be it.

Mean time, stay thou with me, and tell me more
Of this unhappy youth : I have a mind,
With the good keeper's leave, to view the prison.
(*Exeunt.*)

Enter MIRA and ALICE by opposite sides, both muffled up in cloaks and their faces conceal'd.)

MIRA (*stopping Alice*).

Nay, glide not past me thus with muffled face :
'Tis I, a visitor to these grim walls,
On the same errand with thyself. How goes it
With our enthralled colleague ? doth he promise
Silence to keep in that which touches us
Of this transaction, for the which he's bound ?

ALICE.

He is but half persuaded ; go thyself
And use thy arts—hush, here’s a stranger near us.

*Enter a Man who gives a letter mysteriously to
Mira, and upon her making a sign to him, re-
tires to the bottom of the stage whilst she
reads it.*

What read’st thou there, I pray thee, that thy brows
Knit thus ungraciously at ev’ry line ?

MIRA.

Know’st thou that I must doff my filken robes,
Despoil my hair of its fair ornaments,
And clothe me in a gown of palmer’s grey,
With clouted shoon and pilgrim’s staff in hand
To bear me o’er rude glens and dreary wastes
To share a stony couch and empty board,
All for the proving of my right true love
For one in great distress. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !
So doth this letter modestly request :
I pray thee read it.

ALICE (*reading the letter*).

“ A deadly wound rankles in my side, and I
have no skilful hand to dress it, and no kind friend
to comfort me. I am laid upon the cold earth, and
feel many wants I never knew before. If thou hast
any love for me, and as thou hast often wish’d to
prove that love, come to me quickly : but conceal
thyself in the coarse weeds of a Pilgrim ; my life is
a forfeit to the law if any one should discover where

I am. A friend in disguise will give into thy hands this letter, and conduct thee to thy miserable Zaterloo." (*returning the letter.*) And what say'st thou to this?

MIRA.

I have in truth, upon my hands already Troubles enough; this is, thou know'st, no time To take upon me ruin'd men's distresses.

ALICE.

But 'tis thyself hast brought this ruin on him;
'Twas thy extravagance.

MIRA.

Thou art a fool!

His life's a forfeit to the law: 'tis time,
Good time, in faith! I should have done with him.
Why dost thou bend these frowning looks on me?
How many in my place would for the recompence
Betray him to the officers of justice?
But, I, thou know'st right well, detest all baseness,
Therefore I will not.

ALICE.

Hush, hush! thou speak'st too loud:
Some one approaches.

Enter COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO (*to Mira.*)

I pray you, Madam, pardon this intrusion;
Tracing your steps, I have made bold to follow you.

And would'st thou have a stranger come to thee?

Alas! alas! where can thy aching head

So softly rest as on a parent's lap?

Yes, I will wrap me in the Pilgrim's weeds,

Nor storm nor rugged wild shall bar my way.

And tho' declining years impair my strength,

These arms shall yet support thy feeble frame,

When fairer friends desert thee.

(To the Messenger, beckoning him to come forward.)

Good friend, this is no place to question thee!

Come with me to my home.

(Exeunt.)

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

The inside of the Prison: Rayner and Elizabeth are discovered sitting sorrowfully by one another in earnest discourse.

RAYNER.

Thou sayest well, my sweet Elizabeth;
 In this I have against thy love offended.
 But in the brightness of fair days, in all
 The careless gaiety of unruffled youth,
 Smiling like others of thy sex, I loved thee;
 Nor knew that thou wert also form'd to strive
 With the braced firmness of unyielding virtue
 In the dark storms of life—alike to flourish
 In sunshine or in shade.—Alas! alas!
 It was the thoughts of seeing thee—but cease!
 The die is cast; I'll speak of it no more:
 The gleam which shews to me thy wond'rous
 excellence
 Glares also on the dark and lowering path
 That must our way divide.

ELIZABETH.

O no! as are our hearts, one is our way,
 And cannot be divided. Strong affection
 Contends with all things, and o'ercometh all things.
 I will unto thee cling with strength so terrible,
 That human hands the hold will ne'er unlock.

RAYNER.

Alas, my love ! these are thy words of woe,
And have no meaning but to speak thy woe :
Dark fate hangs o'er us, and we needs must part.
The strong affection that o'ercometh all things,
Shall fight for us indeed, and shall o'ercome :
But in a better world the vantage lies
Which it shall gain for us ; here, from this earth
We must take different roads and climb to it,
As in some pitiless storm two 'nighted travellers
Lose on a wild'ring heath their 'tangled way,
And meet again.

ELIZABETH.

Ay, but thy way, thy way, my gentle Rayner—
It is a terrible one.
Oh flesh and blood shrinks from the horrid pass !
Death comes to thee, not as he visiteth
The sick man's bed, pillow'd with weeping friends :
O no ! nor yet as on the battle's field
He meets the blood-warm'd foldier in his mail,
Greeting him proudly.—Thou must bend thy neck,
This neck round which mine arms now circled
close
Do feel the loving warmth of youthful life :
Thou must beneath the stroke—O horrid ! horrid !

RAYNER (*supporting her from sinking to the ground*).

My dear Elizabeth, my most belov'd !
Thou art affrighted with a horrid picture

By thine own fancy trac'd ; look not upon it :
 All is not dreadful in the actual proof
 Which on th' approach frowns darkly. Rouse thy
 spirit ;

And be not unto me at this dark push
 My heaviest let ; thou who should'st be my stay.

(She groans heavily.)

What means that heavy groan ? I'll speak its mean-
 ing,

And say, that thou to nature's weakness hast
 The tribute paid, and now wilt rouse thyself
 To meet with noble firmness what perforce
 Must be ; and to a lorn and luckless man,
 Who holds in this wide world but thou alone,
 Prove a firm, gen'rous, and heart-buoyant mate,
 In the dark hour. Do I not speak it rightly ?

ELIZABETH.

Thou dost, thou dost ! if nature's weakness in me
 Would yield to the heart's will.

(Falling on his neck in a burst of sorrow.)

Enter Father MARDONIO.

MARDONIO.

My children, ye have been in woeful conference
 Too long : chide not my zeal that hither brings me
 To break upon it. On you both be shed
 Heav'n's pitying mercy !

RAYNER.

Amen, good Father ! thou dost call us children

With a most piteous and kindly voice :
 Here is a daughter who in this bad world
 Will yet remain to want a father's care ;
 Thus let me form a tie which shall be sacred ;
 (Putting Elizabeth's hand into Mardonio's.)
 She has no parent.

Enter KEEPER of the Prison.

What brings thee here ? we would be left in
 peace.

KEEPER *(to Rayner)*.

I am by a right noble stranger urged,
 Who says he has in many a rough campaign
 Serv'd with your valiant father in the wars,
 To let him have admittance to your presence.
 Bertram conducts him hither.

RAYNER.

Serv'd with mine honour'd father ! and thus cir-
 cumstanc'd,
 Now comes to see his son ! Well, be it so :
 This is no time for pride to winch and rear,
 And turn its back upon the patt'ring hail,
 Bearing the thunder's shock. Let it e'en be :
 Admit him instantly. *(Calling him back.)*
 ———— Nay, ere thou goest,
 What is he call'd ?

KEEPER.

The Gen'ral Hardibrand.

RAYNER.

An honour'd name.

*(Exit Keeper.*Retire, my love : *(to Elizabeth.)*

I cannot bear to have thy woes expos'd

Before a stranger's gaze.

*(She retires with Mardonio to an obscure part of the Prison at the bottom of the Stage.)**Enter HARDIBRAND and BERTRAM.*HARDIBRAND *(to Bertram : stopping short as he enters, and gazing upon Rayner, who is turned away from them and looking after Elizabeth.*

It is the son of Rayner : in his form

And face, tho' thus half turn'd from us, I see

His father. Still a soldier and a gentleman

In ev'ry plight he seem'd. A clown or child

Had sworn him such clad in a woollen rug.

(Advancing to Rayner.)

Young soldier, I did know your gallant father ;

Regard me not as an intruding stranger.

RAYNER.

I thank you, courteous sir : in other days

Such greeting to my heart had been most welcome.

A gallant father and condemned son

May in the letter'd registers of kindred

Alliance have ; but in the mind's pure record,

They no relation bear : let your brave friend

Still be to you as one who had no son.

HARDIBRAND.

No, boy ; that sentiment bespeaks thy blood.
 Heed not those fetter'd hands : look in my face,
 Look in my face with the full confidence
 Of a brave man ; for such I'll swear thou art.
 Think'st thou that I am come to visit thee
 In whining pity as a guilty man ?
 No, by the rood ! if I had thought thee such,
 Being the son of him whose form thou wear'st,
 I should have curs'd thee. Thou by mis'ry press'd,
 Hast strongly tempted been, I know thy story :
 Bertram has told it me : and spite of courts,
 And black-rob'd judges, laws, and learn'd decisions,
 I do believe it as I do my creed.
 Shame on them ! is all favour and respect
 For brave and noble blood forgotten quite ?

RAYNER.

Ah, do not fear ! they will remember that,
 And nail some fable trappings to my coffin.

HARDIBRAND.

I would that to their grave and pompous chairs
 Their asses' ears were nail'd ! Think they that men,
 Brave men, for thou thyself—What corps I pray
 thee
 Didst thou belong to in thy Prince's service ?

RAYNER.

The first division of his fourth brigade
 Was that in which I serv'd.

HARDIBRAND.

Thou hast companion been to no mean men,
Those six brave officers of that division,
Upon the fam'd redoubt, in his last siege,
Who did in front o' th' en'my's fiercest fire
Their daring lodgement make, must needs of course
Be known to thee.

RAYNER.

I knew them well ; five of them were my friends.

HARDIBRAND.

And not the sixth ?

RAYNER.

He was, alas ! my greatest enemy ;
To him I owe these bonds.

HARDIBRAND.

A curse light on his head, brave tho' he be !

RAYNER.

O curse him not, for woes enough already
Rest on his wretched head.

(Bowing low and putting his hand on his head.)

HARDIBRAND.

Ha ! thou thyself,—thou wert thyself the sixth !
Thank heav'n for this ! Then let them if they will
Upon a thousand scaffolds take thy life,

And spike thy head a thousand feet aloft ;
Still will I say thy father had a son.

(Rushing into his arms.)

Come to my soldier's heart, thou noble bird
Of a brave nest !—Must thou indeed be pluck'd
And cast to kites ? By heav'n thou shalt not die !
Shall such a man as thou art from his post
Be sham'd and push'd for one rash desp'rate act ?
It shall not be, my child ! it shall not be !

RAYNER *(smiling)*.

In faith, good Gen'ral, could your zeal prevent it,
I am not yet so tir'd of this bad world,
But I could well submit me to the change.

HARDIBRAND.

I'll with all speed unto the Governor,
Nor be discourag'd, tho' he loudly prate
That grace and pardon will but leave at liberty
The perpetrators of such lawless deeds
To do the like again, with such poor cant.

(Elizabeth, who has been behind backs, listening eagerly to their conversation, and stealing nearer to them by degrees in her eagerness to hear it, now rushes forward, and throws herself at Hardibrand's feet.)

ELIZABETH.

We ask not liberty ; we ask but life.
O grant us this, and keep us where they will,
Or as they will. We shall do no disquiet.
O let them grant us life, and we will bless them !

RAYNER.

And would'st thou have me live, Elizabeth,
Forlorn and fad, in lothly dungeon pent,
Kept from the very use of mine own limbs,
A poor, lost, caged thing?

ELIZABETH.

Would not I live with thee? would not I cheer
thee?

Would'st thou be lonely then? would'st thou be
fad?

I'd clear away the dark unwholesome air,
And make a little parlour of thy cell.

With cheerful labour eke our little means,
And go abroad at times to fetch thee in
The news and passing stories of the day.

I'd read thee books: I'd sit and sing to thee;
And every thing would to our willing minds
Some observation bring to cheer our hours.

Yea, ev'n the varied voices of the wind
O' winter nights would be a play to us.

Nay, turn not from me thus, my gentle Rayner!
How many suffer the extremes of pain,

Ay, lop their limbs away, in lowest plight
Few years to spend upon a weary couch

With scarce a friend their sickly draughts to
mingle!

And dost thou grudge to spend thy life with me?

RAYNER.

I could live with thee in a pitchy mine;

In the cleft crevice of a savage den,
 Where coils the snake, and bats and owlets roost,
 And cheerful light of day no entrance finds.
 But would'st thou have me live degraded also ;
 Humbled and low ? No, liberty or nought
 Must be our boon.

HARDIBRAND.

And thou shalt have it too, my noble youth :
 Thou hast upon thy side a better advocate
 Than these grey hairs of mine. (*To Elizabeth.*)
 Bless that fair face ! it was not made for nothing.
 We'll have our boon ; such as befits us too.
 No, hang them if we stoop to halving it !

(*Taking her eagerly by the hand.*)

Come with me quickly ; let us lose no time :
 Angel from heaven thou art, and with heav'n's
 power
 Thou'lt plead and wilt prevail.

RAYNER.

In truth thou wilt expose thyself, my love,
 And draw some new misfortune on thy head.
 (*Endeavouring to draw her away from Hardibrand.*)

ELIZABETH (*to Hardibrand*).

What new misfortune ? can they kill thee twice ?
 We're tardy : O move quickly ! lose no time.

HARDIBRAND.

Yes, come, and Bertram here will guide our way :
 His heart is in the cause.

BERTRAM.

Yes heart and soul, my Gen'ral. Would my
 zeal
 Could now make some amends for what those
 hands
 Against him have unwittingly committed.
 O that the fellest pains had shrunk their nerves
 Ere I had seiz'd upon him!

RAYNER.

Cease, good Bertram!
 Cease to upbraid thyself. Thou didst thy duty
 Like a brave man, and thou art in my mind
 Not he who seiz'd, but he whose gen'rous pity
 Did, in my fallen state, first shew me kindness.
(Bertram kisses his hand.)
 Go go! they wait for thee.

BERTRAM.

They shall not wait. Would that we were
 return'd,
 Bearing good tidings!

HARDIBRAND.

O fear it not, my heart says that we shall.
*(Exeunt Elizabeth, Hardibrand and Bertram.
 Manent Rayner and Mardonio.)*

MARDONIO.

Hope oft, my son, unbraces the girt mind,

And to the conflict turns it loosely forth,
Weak and divided. I'm disturb'd for thee.

RAYNER.

I thank thee, Father, but the crime of blood
Your governor hath ne'er yet pardon'd; therefore
Be not disturb'd for me; my hopes are small.

MARDONIO.

So much the better. Now to pious thoughts
We will direct—Who comes to interrupt us?

Enter the TURNKEY.

RAYNER.

It is the turnkey; a poor man who, tho'
His state in life favours not the kind growth
Of soft affections, has shewn kindness to me.
He wears upon his face the awkwardness
And hesitating look of one who comes
To ask some favour; send him not away.
(*To Turnkey*) What dost thou want, good friend?
out with it, man!
We are not very stern.

TURNKEY.

Please you, it has to me long been a priv'lege
To shew the curious peasantry and boors,
Who from the country flock o' holy days,
Thro' his strait prison bars, the famous robber,
That over-head is cell'd; and now a company
Waits here without to see him, but he's fullen,
And will not shew himself. If it might please you

But for a moment opposite your grate
 To stand, without great wrong to any one,
 You might pass for him, and do me great kindness.
 Or the good Father there, if he be willing
 To doff his cowl and turn him to the light,
 He hath a good thick beard, and a stern eye,
 That would be better still.

RAYNER (*laughing*).

Ha! ha! ha! what say ye to it, Father?

(*Laughing again more violently than at first.*)

MARDONIO (*turning out the Turnkey in a passion,
 and returning sternly to Rayner*).

What means this wild and most unnatural mirth?
 This lightness of the soul, strange and unsuited
 To thy unhappy state? it shocks me much.
 Approaching death brings naught to scare the good,
 Yet has it wherewithal to awe the boldest:
 And there are seasons when the lightest soul
 Is call'd on to look inward on itself
 In awful seriousness.

RAYNER.

Thou dost me wrong; indeed thou dost me
 wrong.

I laugh'd, but, faith! I am not light of soul:
 And he who most misfortune's scourge hath felt
 Will tell thee laughter is the child of mis'ry.
 Ere sin brought wretchedness into the world,
 The soberness of undisturbed bliss

Held even empire o'er the minds of men,
 Like steady sunshine of a cloudless sky.
 But when she came, then came the roaring storm,
 Lowering and dark ; wild, changeful, and perturb'd ;
 Whilst thro' the rent clouds oft times shot the
 gleam

More bright and powerful for the gloom around it.
 E'en midst the savage strife of warring passions,
 Distorted and fantastic, laughter came,
 Hasty and keen, like wild-fire in the night ;
 And wretches learnt to catch the fitful thought
 That swells with antic and uneasy mirth
 The hollow care-lined cheek. I pray thee pardon !
 I am not light of soul.

Death is to me an awful thing ; nay, Father,
 I fear to die. And were it in my power,
 By suffering of the keenest racking pains,
 To keep upon me still these weeds of nature,
 I could such things endure, that thou would'st
 marvel,

And cross thyself to see such coward-bravery.
 For oh ! it goes against the mind of man
 To be turn'd out from its warm wonted home,
 Ere yet one rent admits the winter's chill.

MARDONIO.

Come to my breast, my son ! thou hast subdued
 me. *(Embracing him.)*

And now we will lift up our thoughts to him
 Who hath in mercy saved thy hands from blood.

RAYNER.

Yes, in great mercy, for the which I'd bow
 In truer thankfulness, my good Mardonio,
 Ev'n with these fears of nature on my mind,
 Than for the blessing of my spared life,
 Were it now proffer'd me.

*(They retire into the obscurity of the dungeon, at
 the bottom of the stage, and the Scene closes
 on them.)*

SCENE II. *A small apartment in a solitary cottage
 in the country: Enter Count Zaterloo, supported
 by an attendant and followed by the Countess in the
 disguise of a Pilgrim; both of them wearing masks.
 She places a pillow for his head on a couch or sick
 chair, and he is placed upon it, apparently with
 pain.*

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(to Attendant)*.

There, set him gently down; this will support
 him,

(To Count Zaterloo.) How art thou now? I fear
 thou'rt very faint

After so long a journey.

(To Attendant.) We have no farther need of thine
 assistance:

Thou wilt retire, but be upon the watch.

(Exit Attendant,

COUNT ZATERLOO *(unmasking)*.

Now, charming Mira, lay disguise aside;

Speak thine own natural voice, and be thyself :
 There is no eye to look upon us now ;
 No more excuse for this mysteriousness.
 Let me now look upon thy face and bless it !
 Thou hast done well by me : thou'rt wond'rous
 gentle.

I knew thee fair and charming, but I knew not
 Thou wert of such a soft and kindly nature.
(The Countess unmasks and looks at him sorrowfully.)
 Ha, mother ! is it you ?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Who should it be ? where should'st thou look for
 kindness ?

When we are sick where can we turn for succour ;
 When we are wretched where can we complain ;
 And when the world looks cold and furly on us,
 Where can we go to meet a warmer eye
 With such sure confidence as to a mother ?
 The world may scowl, acquaintance may forsake,
 Friends may neglect, and lovers know a change,
 But when a mother doth forsake her child,
 Men lift their hands and cry, “ a prodigy ! ”

COUNT ZATERLOO *(taking hold of both her hands
 and kissing them)*.

O mother ! I have been a thankless child !
 I've given thee hoary hairs before thy time ;
 And added weight to thy declining years,
 Who should have been their stay.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Be calm, my son, for I do not upbraid thee.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Wretch that I am ! I was an only son,
And therefore bound by no divided tie
To be to thee thy hold and thy support.
I was a widow's son, and therefore bound
By every generous and manly tie
To be in filial duty most devoted.
O I have vilely done ! I feel it now ;
But if I live to be a man again,
I'll prove a better son to thee, dear mother.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

I know thou wilt, my dearest Zaterloo ;
And do not thus upbraid thyself too sharply ;
I've been a foolish mother to thy youth,
But thou wilt pardon me.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Of this no more—How came you by my letter ?
If you did intercept it on its way,
Mira is faithful still.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

It was from Mira's hand that I received it.
She toss'd it at me with a jeering smile
When I with anxious tears inquired for thee.

COUNT ZATERLOO (*rising half from his seat in great passion.*)

O faithless, faithless woman! she it was,
Who made of me the curfed thing I am!
I've been a fool indeed and well requited.
Base, avaricious and ungrateful——oh!

(*Putting his hand on his side as if seized with sudden pain.*)

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Such agitation fuits not with thy ftate:
What ails thee now?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

The pain, the pain! it has return'd again
With encreafed violence.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

God fend thee eafe! why doft thou look fo
wildly,
And grasp my hand fo hard? What is't disturbs
thee?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

My time on earth is fhort.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Nay, fay not fo: thou may'ft recover ftill.
O why this feeming agony of mind?
'Tis not the pain that racks thee.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

There's blood upon my head : I am accursed.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Good heaven forbend ! thou wand'rest in thy
speech.

Thy life I know is forfeit to the law
By some unlawful act, but oh no blood !

COUNT ZATERLOO.

O for a short respite ! but 'twill not be :
I feel my time is near.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Thou wand'rest much : there's something on thy
mind,
Dark'ning thy fancy.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

'Twas I that did it—I that murder'd him :
He who must suffer for it did it not.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

What words are these ? my blood runs cold to
hear them.

COUNT ZATERLOO (*alarm'd.*)

Be still, be still ! there's some one at the door :
All round me is exposed and insecure.

(Countess Zaterloo goes to the door and receives something from a Servant, shutting the door immediately.)

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

It is a servant come to fetch me something.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Has he not heard it? he has heard it all!

(In violent alarm and agitation.)

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Be still, be still! it is impossible.
Thou'lt wak'd the pain again; I see thee tremble.

COUNT ZATERLOO (*writhing as if in great pain*).

Ay, this will master me: 'twill have me now:
What can be done? O for a short reprieve!

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Alas, my child! what would'st thou have me do?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I would have time turn'd backward in his course,
And what is past ne'er to have been: myself
A thing that no existence ever had.
Canst thou do this for me?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Alas! I cannot.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Then cursed be thy early mother's cares!

H

Would thou had'st lifted up my infant form
 And dash'd it on the stones ! I had not liv'd—
 I had not lived to curse thee for thy pains.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

And dost thou curse me then ?

COUNT ZATERLOO (*soften'd*).

O no ! I do not !

I did not curse thee, mother : was it so ?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

No, no, thou didst not : yet I have deserv'd—
 I was a mother-felfish in my fondness ;
 And with indulgence, fenfelefs and extreme,
 Blasted the goodly promise of thy youth.

COUNT ZATERLOO (*rifing half up alarm'd from
 his couch*).

Hark ! there's a noife again ! haft thou more
 fervants
 Coming with errands to thee ?—We're discover'd !

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Be not fofoon alarm'd : it is impoffible.

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Is there an inner chamber ? lead me there ;

(*Pointing to a door.*)

I cannot reft in this. (*Stopping fhort eagerly as fhe
 is leading him out with great difficulty.*)

————— Thine abfence haply
 From thine own houfe, fufpicion may create :

Return to it again, and thro' the day
Live there as thou art wont ; by fall of eve
Thou'lt come to me again.—I'm very weak ;
I must lean hard upon thee.

*(Exit, looking suspiciously behind him as if he
heard a noise, and supported with great diffi-
culty by his mother.)*

SCENE III. *The Countess Zaterloo's house: enter
COUNTESS and a Female ATTENDANT.*

ATTENDANT.

Ah ! wherefore, madam, are you thus disturb'd
Pacing from room to room with restless change,
And turning still a keen and anxious ear
To every noise ? What can I do for you ?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Cease, cease ! thou canst do nothing, my good girl :
I have a cause, but do not seek to know it.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

There is a stranger——

COUNTESS ZATERLOO *(starting with alarm)*.

Ha ! what dost thou say ?

A stranger ! what appearance does he wear ?
Is there but one ? Looks he suspiciously ?

SERVANT.

Be not alarmed, madam ; 'tis a woman.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO (*feigning compofure*).

Thou art a fool to think I am alarm'd :
Or man or woman, whoſoe'er it be,
I am unwell, and muſt not be diſturb'd.

SERVANT.

It is a lady of diſtinguiſh'd mein,
Tho' much in grief, and ſhe ſo earneſtly
Pleads for admittance that I am compell'd—
Pardon me, madam ; but to look upon her
Would move your heart to pity.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Let her enter.

(*Exit Servant.*)

Who may this be ? why do I tremble thus ?
In grief !—the wretched ſurely will not come
In guileful ſeeming to betray the wretched.
(*To Attendant.*) Know'ſt thou who this may be ?

ATTENDANT.

Indeed I do not.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Retire then to a diſtance : here ſhe comes :
But do not leave the chamber.

(*Attendant retires to the bottom of the ſtage, and
enter Elizabeth with her hair and dreſs diſ-
ordered, like one diſtracted with grief.*)

ELIZABETH.

Madam, I come a ſtranger to your preſence,

By misery embolden'd, and urg'd on
 By desperation. In your pity only
 Lives all the hope of my most wretched state :
 O kill it not ! push me not to the brink
 Of misery so deep and terrible !
 Have pity ! O have pity on my woe !
 Thou art a woman, and a woman's heart
 Will not be shut against a wretched woman.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

What would'st thou ask ? thou dost with too
 much grief
 Conceal the point and object of thy suit.

ELIZABETH.

There is in prison bound, condemn'd to die,
 And for a crime by others hands committed,
 A noble youth, and my betrothed love :
 Your son—O shrink not back, nor look so sternly !
 Your son, as secret rumour hath inform'd me,
 Mortally wounded and with little hope
 Of life, can ample testimony give,
 Being himself of those who did the deed,
 That Rayner did it not :—O let him then,
 In whate'er secret place he lies conceal'd,
 In pity let him true confession make ;
 And we will bless him—Heav'n will pardon him !

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Despair hath made thee mad ! art thou aware
 What thou dost ask of me ? Go to our governors ;

They may have pity on thee ; but from me
It were an act against the sense of nature.

ELIZABETH.

Nay, say not so ! I have for mercy sued
At the proud feet of power, and been rejected :
What injury can reach a dying man ?
Can his few hours of breathing poise the scales
'Gainst the whole term of a man's reckon'd life
In youth's best strength ?

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Go, thou hast been deceiv'd with a false tale :
And, were it true, hope ends not but with life ;
Heaven only knows who is a dying man.

ELIZABETH.

For blessed charity close not your pity
Against all other feelings but your own !
(*Clasping the Countess' knees and kissing her hand.*)
Sweet lady ! gentle lady ! dearest lady !
O be not ruthless to a soul bow'd down
In extreme wretchedness !

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Cease, cease ! unlock thy hold : embrace me
not !
Has he for whom thou plead'st from out o' thyself
Receiv'd his being ? press'd with infant lips
Thy yearning bosom ? smiled upon thy knees,

And blest'd thine ear with his first voice of words?
 Away, away! despair has made thee mad,
 That thus thou hang'st upon me.

ELIZABETH.

O he for whom I plead is to my soul
 Its soul: is to my fancy its bound world,
 In which it lives and moves; all else beyond
 Darknefs, annihilation. O have pity!
 For well thou say'st, despair has made me mad.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Let go, let go! thou with a tigress striv'st,
 Defending her bay'd whelp: I have no pity.
 Heav'n will have pity on thee! let me go;
 Unlock thy desp'rate hold.

(Breaks from her and runs out, and Elizabeth, quite overcome, sinks upon the ground, the Attendant rushing forward from the bottom of the stage to support her.)

Enter FATHER MARDONIO.

MARDONIO *(raising her)*.

My daughter, heav'n will send in its good time
 The aid that is appointed for thy state.
 Contend no more, but to its righteous will
 Submit thyself. Let me conduct thee hence.

(Exeunt Mardonio and Attendant supporting her. Re-enter the Countess, looking fearfully round her as she enters.)

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

She is gone now: thank God that she is gone!

There is a horrid conflict in my mind.
What shall I do? I strongly am beset.
I will go quickly to some holy man,
And ghostly counsel ask.

(Exit, crossing the stage with a quick irresolute step, sometimes stopping to consider, and then hurrying on again.)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

A spacious outer Room in the Prison.

Enter an UNDER-JAILOR and a CLOWN.

CLOWN.

I PRAY thee now, my good friend, here is a piece of money for thee—very good money too; thou may'st look o' both sides of it an' thou wilt: it has been wrapped up in the foot of my old holiday stockings since last Michaelmas twelvemonth, and neither sun nor wind has blown upon it. Take it, man, thou art heartily welcome to it if thou canst put me into a good place near the scaffold; or a place were I may see him upon the scaffold; for I am five and thirty years old next Shrove-Tuesday when the time comes round, and I have never yet seen in all my born days so much as a thief fet i' the stocks.

JAILOR.

Poor man! thou hast lived in most deplorable ignorance indeed. But stand aside a little, here is the famous executioner of Olmutz a-coming, who has been sent for exprefsly to do the job; for our own is but a titular hangman; he has all the honours of the office, but little experience in the duties of it.

CLOWN.

O dickens, I'll creep into a corner then, and have a good look of him. A man that has cut off men's heads, save us all! he must have a strange bloody look about him for certain.

Enter two EXECUTIONERS, speaking as they enter.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

What! no execution in this town for these ten years past? Lord pity you all for a set of poor devils indeed! Why I have known a smaller town than this keep ye up a first executioner for the capital business, with a second man under him for your petty cart-tail and pillory work; ay, and keep them handsomely employed too. No execution in such a town as this for these ten years past! one might as well live amongst the savages.

SECOND EXECUTIONER.

It is a pitiful thing to be sure, but don't despise us altogether, Mr. Master: we shall improve by and by, please God; and here is a fair beginning for it too, if the Lord prosper us.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

Ay, thou wilt, perhaps, have the honour of hanging a thief or two before thou art the age of Methuselah; but I warrant ye, the beheading of this young nobleman here by the famous executioner of Olmutz will be remembered amongst you

for generations to come. It will be the grand date from which every thing will be reckoned ; ay, your very grand children will boast that their fathers were present at the fight.

SECOND EXECUTIONER.

I make no doubt on't, my master, but you are a very capital man in your way : Lord forbid that I should envy the greatness of any one ; but I would have you to know that there have been others in the world as good as yourself ere now : my own father cut off Baron Koslam's head upon this very scaffold that we now hear them hammering at.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

Some wandering hocus-pocus Baron, I suppose, that sold nostrums for the tooth-ach. I always put such fellows into the hands of my underling to operate upon ; I never count the dealing with them as your prime work, tho' for certain we must call it your head-work ; ha ! ha ! ha ! (*holding out his axe in a vain-glorious manner.*) Seest thou this axe of mine ? The best blood of the country has been upon its edge : to have had one's father or brother under its stroke, let me tell thee, is equal to a patent of nobility.

SECOND EXECUTIONER.

Well, be it so : I envy no man, God be praised ! tho' thou art set over my head upon this occasion. I have whipp'd, branded, and pilloried in great

meekness and humility for these seven years past; but the humble shall be exalted at last, and I shall have better work to do, by and by, God willing. Let us have no more contention about it.—Who's there? (*observing Jailor and Clown.*) Ay, Jailor, do thou go and kick up the black prince, he is snoring in some corner near us, and send him for some brandy.

(*Jailor coming forward, with the Clown creeping after him, half afraid.*)

JAILOR.

The black prince is no where to be found; he has not been seen since the cells were locked.

SECOND EXECUTIONER.

Go fetch us some liquor thyself then.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

But who is this sneaking behind thee, and afraid to show his face?

JAILOR.

Only a poor countryman, a friend of mine, who wanted to look at you as you past.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

Yes, yes, every body has a curiosity to look at extraordinary persons. (*to Clown.*) Come forward man, and don't be afraid. Did'st thou ever be-

fore see any thing better than a poor parish priest, or a scrubby lord of the village? didst thou, eh?

CLOWN (*abashed*).

I don't know, please you : my brother did once stand within a team's length of the Prince of Carara, when he passed through our village on his way to Franconia.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

So then thou art not the first of thy family that has seen a great man. But don't be afraid, my good fellow, I a'nt proud nor haughty as many of them be : thou shalt even shake hands with me an' thou wilt. (*Holding out his hand to Clown, who shrinks from him, and puts his hands behind his back.*)

CLOWN.

No, I thank you ; I ben't much of a hand-shaker : I have got a little sore on my thumb, may it please you : I thank you all the same as tho' I did.

FIRST EXECUTIONER.

Ay, thou art too mannerly to call it the thing that we wot of. Well, thou art a good sort of fellow ; don't be abash'd : thou see'st I am very condescending to thee. Come, then, thou shalt drink a cup of liquor with me. Follow us into the next ward, my good friend.

CLOWN (*shrinking from him again*).

O na, save your presence ! I'll go with the jailor here.

FIRST EXECUTIONER (*to Second Executioner*).

Ay, he is but a poor bashful clown, and don't know how to behave himself in good company.

(*Exeunt Executioners.*)

CLOWN.

Shake hands with him, Mary preserve us ! it sets the very ends of my fingers a dingling. Drink out of the same mug with him too ! (*sputtering with his lips*) poh ! poh ! poh ! the taste of raw heads and carrion is on my lips at the thoughts of it. (*To Jailor.*) Come let us go out of this place ; I be long enough here. (*stepping short as he goes off.*) What noise and hammering is this we hear ?

JAILOR.

It is the workmen putting up the scaffold.

CLOWN (*starting*).

What, are we so near to it ? mercy on us ! let me get out of this place, for it puts me into a terrible quandary.

JAILOR.

If this be the mettle thou art made of, thou had'st better take thy money again, and I'll give thy place

for the fight to somebody that has got a flouter heart than thou hast.

CLOWN.

Na, na, I won't do that neither ; I have a huge desire to see how a man looks when he is going to have his head cut off, and I'll stay for the fight tho' I should swoon for it. Poor man ! poor man ! what frightful things there be in this world when one's mind sets a thinking upon it !—Is he a tall man now, (*to Jailor*) or a short man ? a pale-faced man, or——ay, pale enough, I warrant. Mercy on us ! I shall think of him many a night after this before I go to sleep. Poor man ! poor man ! what terrible things there be in this world if a body does but think of them.

(*Exeunt Clown and Jailor.*)

SCENE II. *A dungeon; Rayner discovered sitting at a table by the light of a lamp, with a book in his hand; the clock from a neighbouring steeple strikes three, and he, roused with the sound, lays down the book.*

RAYNER.

This bell speaks with a deep and fullen voice :
The time comes on apace with silent speed.

Is it indeed so late ? (*Looking at his watch.*)

It is even so.

(*Pausing, and looking still at the watch.*)

How soon time flies away ! yet, as I watch it,

Methinks, by the slow progress of this hand,
 I should have liv'd an age since yesterday,
 And have an age to live. Still on it creeps,
 Each little moment at another's heels,
 Till hours, days, years, and ages are made up
 Of such small parts as these, and men look back,
 Worn and bewilder'd, wond'ring how it is.
 Thou trav'lest like a ship in the wide ocean,
 Which hath no bounding shore to mark its progress,
 O Time ! ere long I shall have done with thee.
 When next thou ledest on thy nightly shades,
 Tho' many a weary heart thy steps may count,
 Thy midnight 'larum shall not waken me.
 Then shall I be a thing, at thought of which
 The roused soul swells boundless and sublime,
 Or wheels in wildness of unfathom'd fears :
 A thought ; a consciousness ; unbodied spirit.
 Who but would shrink from this ? It goes hard
 with thee,
 Social connected man ; it goes hard with thee
 To be turned out into a state unknown,
 From all thy kind, an individual being.
 But wherefore shrink ? came we not thus to earth ?
 And he who sent, prepar'd reception for us.
 Ay, glorious are the things that are prepar'd,
 As we believe !—yet, heaven pardon me !
 I fain would sculk beneath my wonted cov'ring,
 Mean as it is.
 Ah, Time ! when next thou fill'st thy nightly term,
 Where shall I be ? Fye ! fye upon thee still !
 Ev'n where weak infancy, and tim'rous age,

And maiden fearfulness have gone before thee ;
 And where, as well as him of firmest soul,
 The meanly-minded and the coward are.
 Then trust thy nature, at th' approaching push,
 The mind doth shape itself to its own wants,
 And can bear all things. (*Rising from his seat, and
 walking several times backward and forward.*)

I know not how it is, I'm wond'rous heavy ;
 Fain would I rest a while. This weary frame
 Has but a little more to do for me,
 And yet it asks for rest. I'll lay me down :
 It may be possible that I shall sleep,
 After these weary tossings of the mind ;
 I feel as tho' I should. (*Goes to sleep, covering him-
 self with a cloak.*)

*Enter OHIO, creeping out from a hiding-place at the
 bottom of the stage, and going softly up to Rayner,
 looks for some time upon him with a malicious grin.*

OHIO.

Thou hast lov'd negroes' blood, I warrant thee.
 Dost sleep? ay, they will waken thee ere long,
 And cut thy head off. They'll put thee to rest ;
 They'll close thine eyes for thee without thy leave ;
 They'll bloat thy white skin for thee, lily-face.
 Come, less harm will I do thee than thy fellows :
 My sides are cold : a dead man needs no cloak.

(*Beginning gently to pull off Rayner's cloak, who
 starts from his sleep, and looks at him in
 amazement.*)

RAYNER.

Ha! what hole of the earth hath cast thee up?
 What thing art thou? and what would'st thou
 with me?

OHIO.

My fides are cold; a dead man needs no cloak.

RAYNER.

'Tis true indeed, but do not strip the living.
 Where dost thou run to now? where wert thou hid?

OHIO (*after running to his hiding-place, and fetching
 out a stick, which he presents to Rayner*).

Beat me thyself, but do not tell of me.

RAYNER.

I would not harm thee for a greater fault.
 I'm sorry thou art cold; here is my cloak:
 Thou hast said well; a dead man needs it not.
 I know thee now; thou art the wretched negro
 Who serves the prisoners; I have observ'd thee:
 I'm sorry for thee; thou art bare enough,
 And winter is at hand.

OHIO.

Ha! art thou sorry that the negro's cold?
 Where wert thou born who art so pitiful?
 I will not take thy cloak, but I will love thee.
 They shall not cut thy head off.

RAYNER.

Go thy ways;
 Go sculk within thy hiding place again,
 And, when the cell is open'd, save thyself.

OHIO.

They shan't cut off thy head.

RAYNER.

Now, pray thee go.

OHIO.

I'll kiss thy feet ; I'll spend my blood for thee.

RAYNER.

I do beseech thee go ! there's some one coming :
I hear them at the door. (*Pushes him hastily off.*)

*Enter HARDIBRAND, advancing slowly to Rayner,
his eyes cast upon the ground.*

RAYNER.

Good morrow, general : where's thy friendly
hand ?

Why dost thou turn thine eyes aside, and fear
To look me in the face ? Is there upon it
Aught that betrays the workings of the mind
Too strongly mark'd ? I will confess to thee
I've struggl'd hard, I've felt the fears of nature ;
But yet I have the spirit of a man
That will uphold me : therefore, my brave friend,
Do me the grace to look upon me boldly ;
I'll not disgrace thee.

HARDIBRAND.

No, my valiant boy !
I know thou'lt not disgrace me, nor will I

Put shame on thee by wearing on this morn
 A weeping-face : I will be valiant too.
 We will not, Rayner, tho' thou'rt thus—Oh ! oh !
(Bursting into tears.)

RAYNER.

My gen'rous friend, my second father, why
 Wilt thou oppress me thus ?

HARDIBRAND.

Bear with me, bear with me ; I meant to brave it,
 And I will brave it. But to thee, my son,
 In thy distress, encompass'd as thou art,
 My heart so strongly has enlink'd itself,
 That to part from thee, boy, is ——
(Falling on his neck, and bursting again into tears.)

Enter MARDONIO.

MARDONIO *(after looking at them for some time, and
 in a solemn imposing tone of voice)*.

The strength of man sinks in the hour of trial ;
 But there doth live a pow'r that to the battle
 Girdeth the weak : Heaven's vivifying grace,
 And strength, and holy confidence be thine,
 Who art in mercy stricken ! *(Holding up his right
 hand to heaven, whilst Rayner, approaching
 with reverence, bows himself beneath it very
 low.)*

RAYNER.

Thanks to thee, father ! these are words of power,
 And I do feel their strength. Beneath that hand

Which hath in mercy stricken me, I bow ;
 Yea bow, the nobler and the bolder grown
 For such humility.—(*Familiarly*) How goes the
 time ?
 Does day begin to dawn ?

MARDONIO.

Grey light peeps faintly o'er the eastern towers.

RAYNER.

The time is then advanc'd ; we'll husband it.
 Come close to me, my friends. (*Taking Hardibrand
 and Mardonio each by the hand, and pressing
 them close to his breast.*)
 Of worldly cares, upon my mind there rests
 But only those which I have mention'd to you.
 Yet, in this solemn hour, let me remind you :—
 My poor Elizabeth ———

HARDIBRAND (*eagerly*).

Thou'lt said enough :
 She is my child and heiress of my lands
 To the last rood.—Ah ! what avails it now !

RAYNER.

How shall a dying man find thanks for this,
 Whose day is closed ? I will attempt no thanks.
 The other wish that closely presses on me :—
 Mardonio, upon thee must hang this boon :—
 That miserable man of whom I've told you ;
 Now living in the hell of his remorse,
 Cut off from human intercourse ; whose vision

Of midnight horrors sav'd this hand from blood :
I fain —————

HARDIBRAND (*again eagerly interrupting him*).

Fear not ! fear not ! he shall be sav'd ;
And shall with human beings yet comfort
In blessed charity, if ghostly care
From holiest men procur'd, or off'rings made
To ev'ry sacred shrine on christian ground
Can give him peace.

RAYNER (*smiling and pressing Hardibrand to his bosom*).

With all the prompt and gen'rous profusion
Of eager youth dost thou, mine aged friend,
Take every thing upon thee. Be it so.
And good Mardonio with his sober counsel
Will aid thy bounty. Here I join your hands :
My worldly cares are clos'd.

Enter ELIZABETH, followed by Richard and Bertram, who remain on the back ground whilst she comes slowly forward; Rayner turning round on hearing them enter.

Ah ! who is this ?

Alas ! alas ! it is Elizabeth.

(*Holding out his hand to her.*)

Advance, my love ; thou'rt ever welcome here.
How does it fare with thee ?

ELIZABETH.

It is all mist and darkness with me now ;
I know not how it fares with me.

RAYNER.

Alas!

Thou gentle soul! a dark cloud o'er thee hangs,
 But thro' the gloom the sun again will break,
 And, in the soberness of calm remembrance,
 Thou wilt look back upon misfortunes past
 Like tempests that are laid. Thou dost not heed me:
 Thou dost not speak to me. Alas! Alas!
 What shall I say to thee?

I've lov'd thee well, and would have lov'd thee
 long,

Had it so been—But thou shalt be belov'd!
 Heaven will take charge of thee when I'm at rest:
 The kindly and the good shall be thy kindred,
 (*Putting her hand in Hardibrand's.*)

And ev'ry sorrowful and gentle heart
 Shall knit itself to thee, and call thee sister.

(*Elizabeth makes a motion with her hand as if
 she would speak, and he pauses, but she is
 silent.*)

What meant, my love, that motion of thy hand?

MARDONIO.

She fain would speak to thee, but has no voice.

RAYNER.

I know it well, Elizabeth; no voice
 Need'st thou to tell me how thou'st dearly lov'd
 me,

And dearly do I prize it; 'tis my pride;

E'en humbl'd as I am, it is my pride.
 Heaven's dearest blessings rest upon thy head!—
 And now, since we must part, do in thy love,
 Do for me this last grace; bid me farewell,
 And let my earthly sorrows now be clos'd.
 Heaven's blessing rest upon thee!

(He kisses her, and she turns to go away, Rayner looking after her as she goes, but presently returns again.)

RAYNER.

Thou art return'd, my soul, what would'st thou have?

ELIZABETH *(in a broken voice)*.

A thought—a wish did press upon my heart,
 But it is gone.

RAYNER.

I thank thee for thy wish;
 It is a good one, tho' thou canst not speak it,
 And it will do me good. But leave me! leave me!
 Thou wilt unfit me for a task of strength.

(Elizabeth again attempts to go away, but still returns.)

Ah, wherefore still! wilt thou be cruel to me?

ELIZABETH.

O, no! O, no! I know not what I do:
 It is all mist and darkness with me now:
 I look upon thee, but I see thee not.

Let me once more but feel thy hand in mine
And send me where ye will : my being then
Is at an end. (*They embrace again, and she still
continues to hang upon him.*)

RAYNER (*to Bertram and Richard*).

O, lead her hence, and have some mercy on me!
My father died i' the field a valiant death,
And shall his son upon the scaffold die
O'ercome and weak, reft of that decent firmness
Which ev'n the base and vulgar there assume?
O lead her hence ! in mercy lead her hence !

(*Bertram and Richard tear her from him, and
lead her away, whilst he turns his back, and
hides his face with his hands.*)

ELIZABETH (*stopping short, and tossing up her arms
distractedly as they are leading her out*).

Reprieve ! reprieve ! I hear a voice i' the air !
I hear it yet again !

RAYNER (*uncovering his face, and looking about
eagerly, whilst Hardibrand rushes forward impe-
ruously from the bottom of the stage, where he has
been pacing backward and forward with hasty
strides*).

Is't any thing ?

MARDONIO.

Alas no ! all is silent : 'tis the fancy
Of fond distraction list'ning to itself.

HARDIBRAND.

Nay, it was something : Bertram, thou did'st hear it ?

BERTRAM.

No, I heard nothing.

HARDIBRAND.

What, nor thou, good Richard ?

RICHARD.

No, nothing.

ELIZABETH (*holding up her arm distractedly as Richard and Bertram lead her off*).

And is it nothing ! no redemption near !

(*Exeunt Elizabeth, Richard, and Bertram, whilst Rayner, uttering a deep groan, hides his face, and Hardibrand returns with hasty strides to the bottom of the stage.*)

RAYNER (*uncovering his face*).

Is she gone now ?

MARDONIO.

She is.

RAYNER.

Thank God for it ! Now to our task :

(*Stepping forward with assumed firmness.*)

What of it now remains we shall o'er-master.

Pray thee how goes the time ? But pardon me !

I have too oft enquir'd how goes the time :

It is my weakness.

MARDONIO.

The morning now advances.

RAYNER.

So I reckon'd.

We too shall put ourselves in forwardness :
And so, good father, to your ghostly guidance
I do commend myself.

Enter JAILOR.

JAILOR.

The officers of justice are arrived,
And wait the presence of the prisoner.

RAYNER.

They come upon us sooner than we wist ;
But 'tis so much the better.

(To Mardonio aside.)

Shall we have time allow'd us for retirement,
Before they lead me forth ?

MARDONIO.

'Tis ever so allow'd.

RAYNER.

Come then, I feel me stronger than I was :
'Twill soon be past ; the work goes on apace.

*(Taking hold of Hardibrand and Mardonio as
he goes out.)*

Your arm, I pray :—I know not how it is ;

My head feels dizzy, but my limbs are firm.
 Good Hardibrand, think'st thou I shall disgrace
 thee?

HARDIBRAND.

No, by the mass! I'll give them this old carcase
 To hack for crow's meat if thou shrink'st one hair's
 breadth
 From the comportment of a gallant soldier,
 And of a brave man's son.

RAYNER (*smiling with a gratified look.*)

I thank thee.

Methinks I tread now, as I onward move,
 With more elastic and dilating step,
 As if a spirit of pride within me stirr'd,
 Buoying me up on the swollen billows ridge.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III. *An outer garden-room or portico in the house where Zaterloo is concealed; enter Countess and a Confessor, with two Attendants bearing Zaterloo on a small couch, which they set down on the middle of the stage; the Attendants retire.*

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

The air revives him: look, I pray thee, father,
 How the fresh air revives him: say not then
 All hope is banish'd quite.—Thou shak'st thy head:
 But whilst I see upon his moving breast
 One heave of breath, betok'ning life within,

I'll grasp at hope, and will not let it go.

(Bending over the couch.)

My son! my son! hear'st thou my voice, my son?

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Yes, mother: I have had a fearful struggle.
'Tis a strong enemy that grapples with me,
And I must yield to him.—O pious father!
Pray thou for mercy on me.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Yes, my son,

This holy man shall pray for thee; the shrines
Of holiest saints be gifted for thee; masses
And sacred hymns be chanted for thy peace:—
And thou thyself, even 'midst thine agony,
Hast spoken precious words of heav'nly grace;
Therefore be comforted.

COUNT ZATERLOO *(shaking his head)*.

There is no comfort here: dark, veil'd, and
terrible,
That which abides me; and how short a space——

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

O thou may'st yet recover!

CONFESSOR.

Lady, forbear! this is no time to soothe
With flatt'ring hopes: his term is near its close;
Therefore, I do again entreat it of you,
Send off the messenger with his confession,

Lest it should be too late to save the innocent,
And he be sent unto his long account
With a most heavy charge upon his head.

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Thou mak'st me tremble.—Ho! There, you
without!

Send here the messenger. (*Calling off the stage.*)

——His steed is ready :

He shall forthwith depart.

Enter MESSENGER.

CONFESSOR (*to* Messenger).

Take thou this packet, and with full-bent speed
Go to the city to the governor,
And see that into his own hand thou give it,
With charges that he read it instantly.
It is of precious moment to *his* life
Who on the scaffold should this morning suffer.
Quick mount thy horse : few minutes goaded speed
Will take thee to the gates.

MESSENGER.

Few minutes goaded speed, five leagues to master!

CONFESSOR.

Five leagues ! thou'rt mad.

MESSENGER.

No, marry ! know ye not
The flooded river hath last night broke down
The nearer bridge ?

CONFESSOR.

What, art thou sure of this?

MESSENGER.

I am now come from gazing on the sight.
From bank to bank the red swollen river roars ;
And on the deep and slowly-rolling mass
Of its strong centre-tide, grimly and dark,
The wrecks of cottages, whole ricks of grain,
Trunks of huge trees torn by the roots,—ay, save
us !

And floating carcases of perish'd things,
Bloated and black, are borne along ; whilst currents
Cross-set and furious, meeting adverse streams
On rude uneven surface, far beyond
The water's natural bed, do loudly war
And terrible contest hold ; and swoltring eddies
With dizzy whirling fury, toss aloft
Their surgy waves i' the air, and scatter round
Their ceaseless bick'ring gleams of jagged foam,
All fiercely whit'ning in the morning light.
Crowds now are standing upon either shore
In awful silence ; not a sound is heard
But the flood's awful voice, and from the city
A dismal bell heard thro' the air by starts,
Already tolling for the execution.

CONFESSOR.

What's to be done ? fate seems to war against us.
No, no ! we'll not despair ! Mount thy fleet horse,

Life and death's in thy speed :—
 Let naught one moment stop thee on thy way :
 All things are possible to vig'rous zeal :
 Life and death's in thy speed : depart ! depart !
 And heaven be with thine efforts.

(Exit Messenger, after receiving the packet.)

COUNT ZATERLOO.

Is he gone ? is it done ?

CONFESSOR.

Yes he is gone : God grant he be in time,
 For unto human reck'ning 'tis impossible !

(To Countess with an upbraiding look.)

Half an hour sooner——

COUNTESS ZATERLOO.

Oh, torment me not !

Who could foresee this hind'rance ?—O, good father !

Look to thy penitent. Upon his count'nance
 There's something new and terrible. Speak to him :
 Go close to him, good father.—O my son !

COUNT ZATERLOO.

I feel within me now—this is the feeling :
 I am upon the brink, the dreadful brink :
 It is a fearful gulf I have to shoot.
 O yet support me ! in this racking pain
 I still may hold a space the grasp of life,

And keep back from the dark and horrid—Oh!

(uttering a deep groan) It is upon me!

(Struggles and expires with a faint groan.

Countess, wringing her hands in agony of grief, is hurried off the stage by the Confessor and Attendants, who rush in and take hold of her.)

SCENE IV. *An open square before the great gate of the prison: a Crowd of spectators, with guards, &c. are discovered, waiting for the coming forth of Rayner to his execution, and a solemn bell is heard at intervals. The gate opens, and enter Rayner walking between Mardonio and Hardibrand, and followed by Richard and Bertram, preceded and followed by guards, officers, &c. The procession moves slowly over the stage, and exeunt, followed by the greater part of the Crowd, though a good many of them still remain upon the stage. Then re-enter Hardibrand and Richard, followed by one or two of the Crowd: Hardibrand walking up and down in a perturbed manner, and Richard leaning his back against the side-scene, where he continues motionless with his eyes fixed on the ground. The murmur of the multitude is heard for some time without, and then ceases, followed by a dead silence.*

FIRST CROWD.

The found of the multitude is still now.

SECOND CROWD (looking out.)

I fancy, by the crowd who stand all gather'd

round yonder in dead silence, he is now preparing for the block.

THIRD CROWD.

It must be so: mercy on us, what a mantle of human faces there be spread round on every side, and not one sound of voice amongst them all!

(A long pause.)

HARDIBRAND *(Starting and stopping suddenly, to First Crowd).*

Didst thou hear aught?

FIRST CROWD.

No, they are still silent.

HARDIBRAND.

Look out, I pray thee, and tell me what thou see'st.

(First Crowd looks out.)

What dost thou gaze at with so broad an eye?

FIRST CROWD.

The executioner is now mounted upon the platform, and the prisoner——O! I cannot look any more! *(A loud confused noise is heard without.)*

HARDIBRAND.

What's that?

SECOND CROWD.

It is like the cry of a great multitude when they look upon something that is terrible.

FIRST CROWD.

Then the stroke is given, and it is all over now.

(Hardibrand turns hastily away, and rushes to the other end of the stage, whilst Richard gives a heavy groan, and still remains motionless. A shout is heard without.)

HARDIBRAND (*returning furiously from the bottom of the stage*).

More of that horrible din!—

May they bring down the welkin on their heads!

SECOND CROWD (*to First Crowd*).

What art thou looking at now?

FIRST CROWD.

Nay, there is nothing to look at now: the platform is down, and the crowd is returning home again.

Enter OHIO, running across the stage.

OHIO.

I've done it! I've done it! I've done it! (*Exit.*)

Enter a MESSENGER in great haste, followed by a Civil Officer.

FIRST CROWD.

Where are you running to so fast?

MESSENGER.

Is the execution over?

FIRST CROWD.

Yes, it is over.

MESSENGER.

Ah! then I am too late.

FIRST CROWD.

What mean ye by that?

MESSENGER.

I brought a pardon for him.

HARDIBRAND (*rushing upon the messenger and collar-
ing him*).

A pardon! O confound your tardy speed!
Had you upon some paltry wager strove,
You had run faster.—O, thou curst fool!
O had'st thou sped, I'd made a rich man of thee!

MESSENGER *disentangling himself*).

My steed and I across the high-swoln flood,
Those on the shore shrieking to see our boldness,
Have fearless swam some miles short of the pass
Which we must else have gain'd, or, by my faith,
I had been later.

HARDIBRAND.

Thou liest, thou cursed fool ! thou should'st have
 sped
 Swift as a bullet from the cannon's mouth.

(Collaring him again.)

Enter RAYNER, MARDONIO, BERTRAM, and
 CROWD.

MARDONIO *(to Hardibrand, pulling him back from
 the Messenger).*

Hold, general ! what hath the poor man done ?

HARDIBRAND.

What has he done ! he's brought a pardon, fiend !

*(The Crowd give a great shout crying out "par-
 don, pardon," and Hardibrand, turning round
 at the noise, and seeing Rayner, springs for-
 ward, and catches him in his arms.)*

God blefs us all, and let us keep our wits !
 Is this true seeing that my eyes are blest with ?
 O welcome, welcome ! this is wonderful !
 My boy ! my noble boy ! my gallant boy !
 Thou art a man again, and I—I'm mad :
 My head wheels round, but 'tis a blessed madness.
 What say'st thou ? art thou silent ?
 Hast no voice ?

RAYNER.

To be upon the verge of death is awful ;
 And awful from that verge to be recall'd.
 God blefs ye ! O God blefs ye ! I am spent ;
 But let me draw my breath a little while,

And I will thank you—I will—Bear with me :
 I cannot speak. (*Recovering himself, and seeing the
 Crowd gather round him with joyful and sym-
 pathizing looks.*)

Surely 'tis a kind world I have return'd to ;
 There's sympathy and love in ev'ry heart.

MARDONIO (*to Messenger*).

Where is the pardon ? let me have it friend,
 That I may read it. (*Messenger gives him a paper,
 which he reads.*)

We charge thee upon our authority to set the
 (*Reading the rest low to himself.*)

What ! call ye this a pardon which acquits
 The prisoner as guiltless of the crime ?
 May God be praised ! how has all this been ?

MESSENGER.

Count Zaterloo, who on his death-bed lies,
 In deep remorse, a paper of confession,
 Attested by a priest and his own mother,
 Caus'd to be drawn, which to the governor
 I've brought, I wot, as quickly as I might,
 Tho' (*pointing to Hardibrand*) this good gentleman—

HARDIBRAND (*embracing the Messenger*).

O no ! O no ! thou'rt a brave fellow now,
 And as I've said I'll make a rich man of thee.
 But I'm bewilder'd still : how hath it been
 That he is sav'd, seeing no pardon reach'd him ?

MARDONIO.

Yes, thou may'st wonder! for some unknown
friend

Had fawn across the main prop of the scaffold,
So that the headsmen mounting first, the platform
Fell with a crash; and he, all maim'd and bruised,
Unfit to do his office, was perforce ——

HARDIBRAND.

Ay, ay, 'tis plain, thou need'st not tell me more.—
But he the unknown friend ——

Enter OHIO, running exultingly.

OHIO.

'Twas I that did it!
Beat me and scourge me as ye list: I did it!
He offer'd me his cloak: he pitied me;
And I have paid him back.

HARDIBRAND.

Ha! well done and well said, my brave black
thing!
Art thou a prince? in faith I think thou art.
I'll take thee home, and make a man of thee.
No, no! (*pointing to Rayner*) here is my son, my
heir, my child:
All that I have is his: he will reward thee.
'Thou hast a gen'rous mind, altho' debas'd
With vile oppression and unmanly scorn.

RAYNER (*taking Ohio and Hardibrand both by the hand*).

What shall I say to you? my heart would speak
What my voice cannot. O! and here comes one
Who mocks all power of words.

(*Enter Elizabeth running, and rushes into Rayner's arms; the Crowd then eagerly gathers round them, and closes upon them.*)

MARDONIO (*stepping out from the crowd, and looking upon them.*)

Yes, gather round him, kindly souls tho' rude,
In the true artless sympathy of nature;
For he is one o'er whom the storm has roll'd
In awful power, but spar'd the thunderbolt.—
When urg'd by strong temptation to the brink
Of guilt and ruin, stands the virtuous mind
With scarce a step between; all pitying heaven,
Severe in mercy, chaf'ning in its love,
Oftimes, in dark and awful visitation,
Doth interpose, and leads the wand'rer back
To the straight path, to be forever after
A firm, undaunted, onward bearing traveller,
Strong in humility, who swerves no more.

(*Exeunt.*)

THE COUNTRY INN:

A COMEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

WORSHPINGTON, *nephew to Sir John.*

AMARYLLIS, *a poet.*

DAVID, *servant, &c. of the inn.*

WILL, *postboy of the inn.*

JENKINS, *servant to* Worshipton.

Piper, Fidler, &c.

WOMEN:

LADY GOODBODY.

MISS MARTIN, } *nieces to Lady Good-*
MISS HANNAH CLODPATE, } *body.*

DOLLY, *maid of the inn.*

LANDLADY.

HOPKINS, *Lady Goodbody's maid.*

SALLY.

SCENE,—*A Country Inn, on one of the cross-roads leading from the North of England to London.*

THE COUNTRY INN:

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The kitchen of a Country Inn: David and Jenkins discovered sitting by the fire-side.*

DAVID.

JOHN THOMSON, says I, why do you put yourself into a passion? an angry man, says I, John, may be compared to three things.

JENKINS.

Yaw! yaw! (*yawning very wide*) how thick that snow falls! (*looking to the window.*)

DAVID.

Well, well! let it fall as thick as it pleases!—To three things, John. In the first place, in respect that he is very hot and very restless and all that, he may be compared to the boiling of a pot——no, no! that was the third thing.

JENKINS.

Never mind, man, put it first this time for a variety.

DAVID.

No, no ! let us have every thing as it should be. In the first place then, says I, in respect that he is so sharp, and so fussy, and so bouncing, he may be compared to your poor bottled small-beer : and in the second place, in respect that he is so loud and violent, and so hasty, he may be compared ——

JENKINS.

Yaw ! yaw ! yaw ! (*yawning again very loud.*)

DAVID (*very impatiently*).

Tut, man ! can't you keep those jaws of yours together, and hear what a body says ?

JENKINS.

Yaw, yaw ! Don't think because I yawn, David, that I don't hear what you say.—But go on with your story : in the second place ——

DAVID.

In the second place, says I, in respect that he is so violent and so loud, and so hasty, he may be compared to the letting off of a ——

JENKINS.

Of a train of gun-powder.

DAVID.

No, sir ; it was not to that, sir.

JENKINS.

To the letting off of what, then?

DAVID.

No matter what: I had a comparison of my own, but I'll keep it to myself.

JENKINS.

Very well, David; just as you please; for I can see now what an angry man is like, without your giving yourself any further trouble.

DAVID.

Ay, ay! jeer away sir! you are just like your poor silly affected master up stairs, who simpers whenever I open my mouth to speak, as if nobody had any sense but himself.

JENKINS.

I don't think that my master sets up for a wise man neither, master David; but he's young and well made, and ———

DAVID.

He well made, hang him! his uncle is a better made man by half.—Ay, there is a gentleman for ye! a reasonable, sensible, mannerly gentleman! he don't break in upon one with his sneers and his jeers when a body is talking soberly and sensibly.

JENKINS.

To be sure he has rather more manners about him than we can pretend to.

DAVID.

By my faith he has! and more sense too. What do you think he said to me the other day? David, says he, you only want a great wig upon your head and a gown upon your shoulders, to make as good a profer as many that we listen to in the pulpit or the bench. Now, wan't it very condescending in him to call such a poor unlearned man as me a profer, along with such great folks as these? Not that I regarded so much the compliment to myself, for God knows, it becometh not a mortal man to be proud, but I love to hear people speak rationally and civilly.

JENKINS.

Yes, there is nothing like it to be sure: but my young master is a very good master to me, and he spends his money like a gentleman.

DAVID.

I don't care a rush how he spends his money: they seem to be the greatest gentlemen now-a-days, who have least money to spend. But if you had fallen sick on the road, like that poor old devil in the rose chamber, would your master have stopp'd so long at a poor Country Inn, to attend you himself

like a sick nurse? I trow not! he would have scamper'd off, and left you to follow when you could, or to die, if you had a mind to it.

JENKINS.

If I were old and sickly, indeed, I had as lief have Sir John for my master.

DAVID.

I believe so: he is a better man than that skip-jack nephew of his, twenty times over, and a better looking man too. I wonder much how he has come to this time o' th' day (for he must be near forty I guess) without taking a wife.

JENKINS.

He thinks himself happier, I suppose, without one. And I am sure no lady of any spirit or fashion would think herself happy with him.

DAVID.

How so? what kind of man is he at home on his own estate?

JENKINS.

Why half ploughman; for he often enough holds his own plough of a morning, and can cast ye up as straight a furrow as any clod-footed lout in the country; half priest, for he reads family prayers to his servants every Sunday evening as devoutly as the vicar of the parish; half lawyer, for there is never a poor silly idiot that allows himself to be cheated

in the neighbourhood who does not run to him about it directly, and he will brow-beat and out-wit half a dozen of attorneys to have the goose righted again, if it were but of a crown's value.

DAVID.

Well, but there is nothing amiss in all this.

JENKINS.

Then his other odd ways. Dinner must be upon the table every day at the very moment he has fixed, and he will not give ten minutes law to the first lord of the land. Devilishly inconvenient that for young fellows like me and my master.

DAVID.

So much the better ; I commend him for it.

JENKINS.

Then he pretends to be hospitable, and entertains the first people of the country, and yet he is not ashamed to boast that there has not been a drunk man in his house since he was master of it.

DAVID.

Nay, odds life ! that is being too particular, indeed.

JENKINS.

Ay, to be sure ; and yet he puts always such an easy good humoured face upon it, that people will

not call him a hunk for all that. One half of it I'm sure would have made any other man pass for a very curmudgeon. What has such a man to do with a wife, unless he could get some sober young lady, educated two hundred years ago, who has kept herself young and fresh all the while in some cave underground along with the seven sleepers, to start up to his hand and say, "pray have me?"—As for my master, he would remain a bachelor if he could; but we young fellows who have only our persons for our patrimony, must dispose of them in their prime when they will fetch the highest price.

DAVID.

To be sure, to be sure! Princesses a piece for you! young men, now a days, are mightily puffed up in their own conceits. They are colts without a bridle, but they bite upon the bit at last. They are butterflies in the sun, but a rainy day washes the colour off their wings. They sail down the stream very briskly, but it carries them over the ca-cartica——cataraet (what ye call a water-fall ye know) at last.

JENKINS.

Faith, David! you string up so many what do ye call 'em similitudes in your discourse, there is no understanding it: you are just like that there poet in the green chamber, that writes upon the windows.

DAVID.

He, drierling fellow! he has not sense enough to

L

make a similitude. If it were not for the words he contrives to make clink with one another at the end of every line, his verses would be little better than what a body may call mere stuff.

Enter DOLLY.

DOLLY.

You'll never write such good ones tho', for all your great wisdom, Mr. David.

DAVID.

Ay, you're a good judge to be sure! I'm sure you could not read them though they were printed in big letters before your nose, huffy. You can tell us, I make no doubt of it, how his julep tastes, and how his breath smells after the garlic peels that he takes to lay the cold wind in his stomach, and how his ruffled night-cap becomes him too; for you have been very serviceable to him of late, and not very sparing of your visits to his chamber of an evening; but as for his verses, Mrs. Doll, you had better be quiet about them.

DOLLY.

I say his verses are as pretty verses as any body would desire, and I don't care a rush what you say about his night-cap or his garlic.

DAVID.

Lord, Lord! to hear how women will talk about what they don't understand! Let me see now if you

know the meaning of the lines he has scratch'd on the middle pane of the north window :

“ 'Twas not that orient blush, that arm of snow,

“ That eye's celestial blue, which caus'd my woe,

“ 'Twas thy exalted mind, my peace which stole,

“ And all thy moving sympathy of soul.”

Now, can you understand that, mistress madam ?

DOLLY.

I say the verses are very pretty verses, and what does it signify whether one understands them or not ?

DAVID.

And then upon the other pane close by it :

“ Give me the maid, whose bosom high

“ Doth often heave the tender sigh ;

“ Whose eye, suffus'd with tender care,

“ Doth often shed the soft luxurious tear.”

(*To Jenkins.*) Now this is Doll herself he means in these verses, for he came to this house the very day that the beggar-woman stole her new stockings from the side of the wash-tub, and I'm sure she shed as many tears about them as would have wash'd them as white as a lily, tho' they were none of the cleanest neither, it must be confess'd.—If I were to write poetry —

DOLLY.

If you were to write poetry ! Don't you remember, when you made that bad metre for Goody

Gibson's grave-stone, and all the parish laugh'd at it?

“ All ye gentle Christians who pass by,
 “ Upon this dumb stone cast a pitying eye ;
 “ I pray you for yourselves, not me, bewail,
 “ I on life's follies now have turned tail.”

And don't you remember when you went to church afterwards, how all the children of the village pointed with their fingers, and turn'd round their behinds to you as you pass'd? If you were to write poetry, forsooth!

DAVID.

Devil take you, you filthy lying jade! it is well for you that I scorn to be angry with the likes of you.

DOLLY (*laughing in his face*).

“ I pray ye for yourselves bewail,
 “ For I on life have turned tail.”

(*David takes up a stool and runs after her to cast it at her head.*) O mercy! my head, my head!

JENKINS (*preventing him.*)

Nay, David, I can't see a lady used ill in my presence. Consider, my good friend, a man in a passion may be compared to three things.

DAVID.

Devil take your three things, and all the things that ever were in the world! If I but once get hold of her!

Enter LANDLADY.

LANDLADY.

What's this noise for? are you all mad to make such a disturbance and gentle-folks in the house? I protest, as I am a living woman, you make my house more liker a Bedlam than a sober Inn for gentle-folks to stop at.

DAVID (*still shaking his fist at Dolly*).

If I could get hold of her, I would dress her! I would curry-comb her!

LANDLADY.

Won't you have done with it yet? curry-comb your horses, and let my maid alone. They stand in the stable poor things in dirty litter up to their bellies, while you sit here prating, and preaching as tho' you were the vicar of the parish.

DAVID.

Must one be always attending upon a parcel of damn'd brutes, as tho' they were one's betters? must a body's arm never have a moment's rest?

LANDLADY.

Let thy tongue rest a while, David: that is the member of thy body that hast most reason to be tired. And as for you, Doll, mind your own work, and other people will leave you alone. Have you pluck'd the crows for the pigeon-pye yet, and

scraped the maggots from the stale mutton? well do I know there's ne'er a bit of all this done; we shall be put to such a hurry scurry to get the dinner dress'd, that all the nice victuals will be spoil'd (*bell rings*). O lud, lud! how they do ring them bells! Run and see what's wanted, Dolly. (*Exit Dolly.*) This comes of making a noise, now! (*Exit Jenkins.*)

DAVID.

The greatest noise has been of your own making, I'm sure.

LANDLADY.

O dear me! what will this house come to! It will turn my poor head at last.

Re-enter DOLLY in a great hurry.

DOLLY.

A coach, a coach! a coach at the door, and fine ladies in it too as ever my eyes beheld.

LANDLADY.

A coach say you! that's something indeed. I wish the stairs had been scower'd this morning. Run and light a fire in the blue chamber.
(*Exeunt Landlady and Dolly severally, in great haste.*)

DAVID.

I wonder what can bring these lady-folks out now in such cold weather as this. Have they never a fire at home to sit by, in a plague to them!

They'll bring as many vile smoking beasts with them, as will keep my poor arms —

(Exit grumbling.)

Re-enter LANDLADY, shewing in LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, and HANNAH, followed by a Maid carrying boxes, &c.

LANDLADY.

O la, ladies ! I am sorry the fires an't lit : but I have just ordered one to be lit in the blue chamber, and it will be ready immediately. I am sure your ladyships must be so cold ; for it is to be sure the severest weather I ever see'd.

LADY GOODBODY.

We shall warm ourselves here in the meantime.

MISS MARTIN.

What place can be so comfortable in a frosty morning as a stool by the kitchen fire ?

(Sits down on a stool by the fire.)

LANDLADY.

O dear, ladies ! here are chairs. *(Sets chairs for them.)*

LADY GOODBODY *(to Maid)*.

Here is a seat for you too, Hopkins, sit down by the fire.

HOPKINS.

I thank you, my lady, I must look after the things in the coach. (*Sets down the box, &c. and exit.*)

LADY GOODBODY (*to Landlady*).

Have you many travellers, ma'am, in this road?

LANDLADY.

O yes, my lady, a pretty many. We had a little time ago my Lady the Countess of Postaway, and a power of fine folks with her. It was a mighty cold day when she came, madam, and she was a mighty good humour'd lady to be sure: she sat by the fire here just in that very corner as your ladyship does now.

MISS MARTIN.

It has been a highly-honour'd nook indeed.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pray ma'am, what have you got in the house for dinner? for it snows so fast I think it will be impossible for us to get any further to day.

LANDLADY.

O la, to be sure! I have got, my lady, a nice pigeon-pye for dinner, and some very tender mutton. But do you know, my Lady Countess would dine upon nothing but a good dish of fried eggs and bacon, tho' we had some very nice things in the house I'll assure you. I don't say, to be sure, that quality

are all fond of the same kinds of victuals; but sometimes it will so happen that pigeons will not be equally plump and delicate as at other times, let us do what we will with them; and the mutton being fed upon old grafs, my lady, will now and then be a little strong tasted or so.—O dear me! if it had not been all eaten up two days ago, I could have given you such a nice turkey! it was to be sure as great a beauty as ever was put upon a spit. However, you may perhaps after all, ladies, prefer the eggs and bacon.

MISS MARTIN.

Yes, my good ma'am; the eggs and bacon that may be eaten to-day will answer our purpose rather better than the turkey that was eaten yesterday.

LADY GOODBODY.

Have you any company in the house?

LANDLADY.

O yes, my lady, we have a good pleasant gentleman, who has been here these three days, because his servant was taken ill upon the road, Sir John Hazelwood, and his nephew with him; and we have a strange kind of a gentleman who has been here these three weeks, just to be quiet, as he says himself, and to study the musics, tho' I can't say we ever hear him play upon any thing neither. However, he diverts himself all day long after his

own fashion, poor man, writing bits of metre upon the windows and such like, and does harm to nobody.

HANNAH (*after gazing for a long time at the things ranged over the chimney*).

There is a pair of candlesticks the very same with those we had in our bed-room at the last inn: look if they an't, the very fellows to them cousin, all but the little bead round the sockets. (*To Miss M.*)

LADY GOODBODY (*to Hannah*).

My good child, you are always observing things that nobody else notices. (*To Miss M.*) Sir John Hazelwood is an old acquaintance of mine; I'll let him know that I am here presently.

Enter DOLLY.

DOLLY.

The room is ready, ladies, and the fire very good.

LADY GOODBODY.

We shall go to it then. Let me have a candle, pray; I shall have some letters to seal by and by.

DOLLY.

Yes, ma'am; and mistress got some wax ones when the great lady was here, I'll bring you one of them.

LADY GOODBODY.

No, no, child! a tallow one will do well enough.

(*Exeunt Lady Goodbody, Miss Martin, and Hannah, Landlady conducting them.*)

Enter WILL.

WILL.

Yes, Doll, give her a tallow candle, and a stinking one too.

DOLLY.

The lady seems a very good lady, Mr. Sauce-box; and as to stinking candles I would have you to know we have no such things in the house.

WILL.

That is plaguy unlucky then, for this is the first time since I came to the house that you have been without them.—Confound the old stingy hypocrite! I wish they smelt like carrion for her sake.

DOLLY.

What makes you so bitter against the poor lady? I'm sure she is as civil a spoken lady as ——

WILL.

Yes, mighty civil, truly. I hate your smooth-spoken people: it is licking the butter off other people's bread that keeps their tongues so well oil'd. I drove like the devil to get here before the

fnow came on; I spared neither myself nor my cattle to please her, and what do you think I had for my pains?

DOLLY.

I can't say: it is a long stage to be sure.

WILL.

Paltry half-a-crown, an' be hang'd to her!

DOLLY.

But why did you take so much pains to please her? I never knew you do so before, but when you were promised a bribe for your trouble.

WILL.

Because I tell you she's a hypocrite, and would deceive Old Nick, if he were not as cunning as herself. When we passed thro' Middleton she bought as many coarse stockings as would have stocked a hosier's shop; and her maid told me they were all to be sent to her own estate to be given to the poor of the neighbourhood; so, thinks I to myself, this must be some rich liberal lady that gives away money with both hands, I won't stand upon trifles with her, and off I set like the deuce. But 'tis all a cursed lie: she'll sell them again, I'll be bound for it, and make a groat of profit upon every pair. I'll be revenged upon her! Hark ye, Doll; I'll give thee a new top-knot if thou'lt help me in any way to be revenged upon her.

DOLLY.

Nay, nay, you promised me one last fair, Will, and brought me home nothing but a twopenny bun after all. I know you well enough; so you may play your tricks off by yourself: I'll have nothing to do with you. *(Exit.*

WILL.

What ails the wench now, I wonder; ever since that there poet, as they call him, has been in the house, she has spoken to me as if I were a pair of old boots. *(Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Parlour.*

Enter Sir JOHN HAZELWOOD and WORSHIPTON.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well, Ned, here is a rich heiress unexpectedly fallen in our way; you or I for her?

WORSHIPTON.

If women favour'd men for their merit, Sir John, I should not presume to enter the lists with you: but, luckily, they prefer a good complexion to a good understanding; a well-made leg to what my grandmother used to call a well-order'd mind; and a very little fashion to a great deal of philosophy; which makes us good-for-nothing fellows come farther into their good graces than wiser men think we are entitled to.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You are very humble and very diffident truly: the meaning of what you say being simply this, that you are a mighty handsome fellow. Well, be it so; make as much of your personal qualifications as you can: it were hard indeed if they did not stand you in some good account, since you and your fashionable brotherhood take no pains to acquire any other.

WORSHIPTON.

And they will stand us in good account, my good sir. Upon my honour we treat the sex in a much fairer manner than you do. She who marries one of us sees what she gets, but he who pretends to a woman on the score of his mental accomplishments, holds out to her a most deceitful lure. A man's temper and opinions may change, but he always wears the same pair of legs.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

There is some reason in this, I confess: and there is one advantage you have in thus tricking out your four quarters for the market,—they are in no danger of going off for less than they are worth. Your man of ton, as you call it, most commonly ends his career by marrying just such a woman as he deserves.

WORSHIPTON.

End his career! who the devil would marry if it were not to prolong it? A man may indeed sometimes be tempted to marry a fashionable beauty to please his vanity.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Or break his heart.

WORSHIPTON.

Poh, poh! there are more people who die of broken heads now o' days. A man may sometimes marry a woman of rank to be look'd up to by his old friends.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Or down upon by his new ones.

WORSHIPTON.

You are crusty now.—But a rich wife is the only one who can really excuse a young fellow for taking upon himself the sober name of husband.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

If this is your opinion, you had better still retain the more sprightly one of bachelor.

WORSHIPTON.

And leave the heiress to you, Sir John.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

No, Worshipton; there is not a woman now existing, as the world goes, that would suit me; and I verily think that here as I stand, with all my opinions and habits about me, I would suit no woman: I must e'en remain as I am.

WORSHIPTON.

I wish to God I could do so too: I should ask no better.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

What should hinder you, young man?

WORSHIPTON.

I am under the necessity of marrying: my circumstances oblige me to it.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I am at a loss to comprehend the necessity you talk of.

WORSHIPTON.

Will three hundred a year and a commission in the army keep a man's pocket in loose money, my good sir, support a groom and valet, a pair of riding horses, and a curricie?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I crave your pardon, sir: these things being necessaries, you are perfectly in the right; and if

you choose to impose a disagreeable restraint upon yourself for such necessities, nobody has any right to find fault with you.

WORSHIPTON.

Impose upon myself a restraint! Ha! ha! ha! pardon me! this is rather an amusing idea of yours.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Why, you would not be base enough to marry a woman and neglect her.

WORSHIPTON.

No, Sir John; I should pay her as much attention as women of the world now expect, and she who is not satisfied with that must be a fool.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well, pray heaven you may find one wise enough to be satisfied with you! But if you seriously mean to pay your addresses to Sir Rowland's heiress, you must inform her of the real state of your affairs. I'll have no advantage taken of a young woman under my eye, tho' it should be for the interest of my family.

WORSHIPTON.

I shall pretend to nothing but what she may be ascertained of if she has eyes in her head.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

No, not so easily ascertained as you imagine. There is many a handsome man in the world whom nature never made so. Flattery has softened many a rugged visage, and lick'd many an awkward cub into shape; and he who takes this method of becoming a pretty fellow before marriage, is bound in honour to continue it, that he may still remain such after marriage.

WORSHIPTON.

What! must I be repeating the same thing to her all my life long? Tell a woman once in plain English that she is charming, and there is no danger of her forgetting it.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well, deal honourably, and I shall rejoice in your success.—But I must go to the stable and give directions to my groom: I shall return presently. *(Exit.)*

WORSHIPTON *(alone)*.

Honourably! yes, yes, we are all mighty conscientious in every thing that is for the interest of another. But watch me as you please, my good Sir John, you shan't find me out. What a plaguy thing it is to have an uncle of forty-one! What a devil of an age it is! for one has but little hope of a legacy from it, and it has, at the same time, all the cold, cautious, advice-giving spirit of

three score and ten. This Sir Rowland's daughter is a good scheme, upon my soul. He must be sickly, I think, from his always living at home in such a retired situation. I dare say he'll die soon, and who knows but the lady may step off too, being of a sickly stock. Yes, I feel a persuasion within me that I am born to be a lucky fellow. But hush! here come the ladies. The fat aunt walks first, and the rich heiress follows. A genteel-looking woman, faith! this is admirable luck. But who is this awkward creature that comes sneaking after them? some humble relation, I suppose.

Enter LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN *and*
HANNAH.

LADY GOODBODY.

I beg pardon if I have made any mistake; I thought Sir John Hazelwood —

WORSHIPTON.

There is no mistake, madam; Sir John will be here immediately. Permit me to place chairs.

LADY GOODBODY.

You are very obliging, but we have sat so long in a close carriage this morning, that we should be glad to stand a little while. Sir John's politeness has made him sacrifice his own convenience, I am afraid.

WORSHIPTON.

I am sure he is well repaid in the honour he receives. (*To Miss Martin.*) I hope, ma'am, you feel no bad effects from the cold journey you have had?

MISS MARTIN.

None at all, I thank you; we have just felt cold enough to make a warm room very comfortable after it.

WORSHIPTON.

What a charming disposition, thus to extract pleasure from uneasiness?

MISS MARTIN.

The merit of finding a good fire comfortable after a cold winter journey, is one that may be claim'd without much diffidence.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pray, sir, did you ever see such a heavy fall of snow come on so suddenly?

WORSHIPTON.

Really, madam, I don't recollect. (*Turning again to Miss Martin.*) But it is the character of true merit ———

LADY GOODBODY.

Pardon me, sir, you have something of the family face; are you not related to Sir John?

WORSHIPTON.

I have the honour to be his nephew, madam. (*Turning again to Miss Martin.*) I shall fall in love with rough weather for this day's good fortune.

LADY GOODBODY.

I suppose, sir, you are acquainted with the family of the Mapletons in your county?

WORSHIPTON.

I believe I have seen them. (*Turning again to Miss Martin, and continuing to speak to her with much devotion.*)

LADY GOODBODY (*to Hannah*).

Well, my dear, you and I must talk together I find. How did you like the country we pass'd thro' to day?

HANNAH.

La, aunt! it is just like our own; I saw no difference.

LADY GOODBODY.

You are foolish, child! is not our's a flat country clothed with trees, and this a bare and hilly one?

HANNAH.

La, I did not look out of the coach windows all the way, except when we stopp'd at the turnpike; and I'm fure it is a little tiled house with a gate by the side of it, just like the one near our own entry; only that our's has got a pear-tree on the wall, and it has got some dried turf piled up by the door, with a part of an old wheelbarrow.

LADY GOODBODY.

Well, you'll have more observation by and by, I hope.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I am happy in the honour of seeing your ladyship and these fair ladies.

LADY GOODBODY.

And we reckon ourselves particulary fortunate in meeting with you, Sir John; you are very good indeed to give up so much of your own accommodation to poor storm-bound travellers. Allow me to present my nieces to you. (*After presenting her nieces.*) It is a long time since we met, Sir John, you were then a mere lad, and I was not myself a very old woman.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I remember perfectly the last time I had the

pleasure of seeing your ladyship, tho' being a bachelor still, I don't care to say how long it is ago. Your brother Sir Rowland was with you then; I hope he is well.

LADY GOODBODY.

He is very well: I ought to have introduced his daughter to you particularly. (Sir John *going up to Miss Martin.*) No, no! this (*pointing to Hannah*) is my brother Rowland's daughter. She is somewhat like her mother, who died, as you know, at a very early age, leaving him but this child.

(*Worshipton, who is about to present with much devotion a glove to Miss Martin, which she had dropped, lets it fall out of his hand, and retreating some paces back, stares with astonishment at Hannah.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*to Hannah*).

I am happy to have this opportunity of paying my respect to the daughter of my old friend. I hope, madam, you will admit of this plea for being better acquainted.

LADY GOODBODY (*aside to Hannah*).

Answer him child.

HANNAH (*curtsying awkwardly*).

My father is very well, I thank you, sir.

MISS MARTIN (*looking slyly at Worshipton*).

I fancy, after all, I must pick up this glove myself, I am afraid some sudden indisposition —

WORSHIPTON (*confusedly*).

I beg pardon! I—I have a slight pain in my jaw-bone; I believe it is the tooth-ach.

LADY GOODBODY.

The tooth-ach! how I pity you! there is no pain in the world so bad, But I have a cure for it that I always carry about in my pocket for the good of myself and my friends: do swallow some drops of it; it will cure you presently (*offering him a phial*).

WORSHIPTON (*retreating from her*).

You are infinitely obliging, madam, but I never take any thing for it.

LADY GOODBODY (*following him with the phial*).

Do take it, and hold it in your mouth for some time before you swallow it. It is very nauseous, but it will cure you.

WORSHIPTON (*still retreating*).

Pray, madam, be so obliging as to excuse me: I cannot possibly swallow it.

LADY GOODBODY (*pressing it still more earnestly*).

Indeed, indeed, it will cure you, and I must positively insist upon your taking it.

WORSHIPTON (*defending himself vehemently*).

Positively then, madam, you oblige me to say—
(*breaking suddenly away.*) Pest take all the drugs
in the world! (*Aside.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You must not, Lady Goodbody, insist on curing
a man against his will: he likes the pain perhaps;
let him enjoy it.

WORSHIPTON (*returning*).

Indeed I am very much obliged to your ladyship;
I am much better now. Forgive my impatience;
I don't know what I said.

LADY GOODBODY.

I am very glad you are better, and I forgive you
with all my heart, tho' it is a remedy that I have
long had the greatest faith in, distill'd by myself
from the very best ingredients, and has cured a
great many people, I assure you. (*To Sir John.*)
So you took this lady for Sir Rowland's daughter?
(*pointing to Miss Martin.*) Do you see no traces in
her countenance of my sister and Colonel Martin?
She lost both her parents early, and she has ever
since been my child.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You are happy in having such a daughter.

LADY GOODBODY.

I am so: she is a very good girl, and has many excellent qualities, which young women now a-days do but rarely possess.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I dare say she is a most amiable companion, whom you would be very unwilling to part with.

LADY GOODBODY.

Nay, Sir John, I am not so selfish neither, but that I should willingly give her up to a good husband.

MISS MARTIN (*aside to Lady Goodbody*).

Bless me, ma'am, why will you do this? you know I can't bear it. (*Aloud to Sir John.*) You must not trust Lady Goodbody's account of me; for if she thought size necessary to make a woman perfect, it would be difficult to persuade her that I am not six feet high.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Excuse me, ma'am, I have always trusted to Lady Goodbody's opinions, and have never felt more inclination to do so than at this moment.

LADY GOODBODY.

She always behaves like a fool when she is praised, and, excepting this, I don't know a fault that she has.

(Enter a Servant announcing dinner.)

(To Miss Martin.) Go before, my dear, and place my chair as you know I like it. *(Exit Miss Martin, followed by Sir John leading out Lady Goodbody.)*

WORSHIPTON *(looking askance at Hannah, and then going up to her with an unwilling struggle).*

Permit me to have the honour——

(Exit, handing her out.)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. Lady Goodbody, Miss Martin, *and* Hannah, Sir John Hazelwood, Worshipton, *and* Amaryllis, *discovered sitting by a table, with wine and glasses, &c. before them.*

LADY GOODBODY.

But indeed, my dear Sir John, you ought to marry.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Indeed, my dear Lady Goodbody, I can't see that I am in duty bound so to do.

LADY GOODBODY.

Ah, but you are tho' ! It would have made your good worthy grandmother so happy to have seen children of yours growing up to preserve the honours of the family.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

It is too late now to think of pleasing my grandmother after she has been twenty years in her grave : your ladyship must offer some other argument to convince me.

LADY GOODBODY.

You owe it to your country then : all families who have good fortunes and good blood in their veins, should be kept up for the sake of their country. Is not every body sorry when a house of this kind becomes extinct ?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

If I thought my estates would cease to bear corn and hay upon them in possession of a different family, I should marry to-morrow for the good of the country most certainly. I should be very sorry to be sure to make every body sorry for my want of heirs : but I remember when my neighbour Squire Wheelbarrow lost his only son, there was as much merry-making, and as much ale drank at the very next fair, upon his own estate too, as if nobody had cared a rush about the matter. I believe you must produce some stronger reason still, my lady.

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, do keep it up, madam ! don't let him off so easily.

LADY GOODBODY. (*gayly*).

For the sake of the ladies then, Sir John, you ought to be a bachelor no longer.

WORSHIPTON.

Now your ladyship attacks him from a strong post.

AMARYLLIS.

Now, madam, you touch the finest chord of the soul's harmony.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

She does ; I allow it. But I contend that I am of more service to the ladies in my present state than I could possibly be in any other. Have I not danced at our country balls with all the neglected damsels who could find no partners to lead them out for these ten years past ? and do I not still serve as a forlorn hope to half the desponding maidens and unsettled widows of the west-riding of Yorkshire ?

WORSHIPTON (*to Lady Goodbody*).

Upon my honour, madam, he tells you serious truth as to the neglected damsels, for he has danced with them so often, that it would be no longer the fashion for any other kind of damsels to dance with him if he had not too good an estate to be rejected.

LADY GOODBODY.

Your services to the ladies are too general, Sir John ; to make one deserving woman happy is the best way of shewing your respect for them.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

And what lady, my good madam, will expect happiness from an elderly rusticated bachelor ?

LADY GOODBODY.

No sensible woman dislikes an agreeable man because he may be past the heyday of his life. My niece here (*pointing to Miss Martin*) has often said to her giddy companions, that an agreeable man of forty is preferable to the frivolous young men of the world that one meets with every where now-a-days.

MISS MARTIN.

You would oblige me very much, my dear madam, if you would speak your own sentiments, without doing me the honour to make me so much wiser than I pretend to be.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

If your ladyship pleases we shall drop this subject. I am obliged to you for your friendly advice, but it is not in my power to profit by it; for I cannot, for the mere love of being married, yoke myself to a bad wife; and I am so capricious and so strange with my old-rooted habits, that I really don't deserve to have a good one.

WORSHIP'TON.

That is the very case with him madam; he must have, forsooth, such a woman as the sun never beheld: a woman of wit who holds her tongue; a good housewife who teizes nobody with her eco-

mony; and a woman who knows the world, and yet prefers retirement in the country, and his honour's amiable conversation, to every thing in it. May I be——if ever I require more of any woman than to be well dress'd and look pretty as long as I live.

LADY GOODBODY (*to Sir John*).

Do you tolerate oaths in your presence?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I don't at least encourage them by my example.

WORSHIPTON.

How should you, my good sir? you bury yourself so much in the country you scarcely know what oaths are in use.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

That is not my reason for abstaining from them, however: if ever I should betake myself to swearing, I shall give myself very little concern about the fashion of the oath; ods bodikins will do well enough for me, and lack-a-dayfy for my wife, if I should ever be happy enough, following Lady Goodbody's advice, to have one. But Mr. Amaryllis are you silent all this while? it is surely your turn next to tell us what kind of a woman you prefer: some very refined being undoubtedly.

AMARYLLIS.

Beauty, wit, fashion, and economy are prized by

most men, Sir John, but let the maid whose tender sensibility, whose soft delicacy, whose sympathy of soul gently animates her countenance, be my portion, and every other thing I can dispense with.

MISS MARTIN.

You three gentlemen, at least, are so far lucky in your tastes, that you are in no danger of ever becoming rivals.

LADY GOODBODY.

I must own, however, Sir John's choice appears to me to be the most reasonable, and not so difficult to be met with neither. My nieces spend many lonely months in the country with me, and Miss Martin prefers it, tho' she is naturally of a gay disposition; why should we not believe then that there are many young women in the world of the same character?

MISS MARTIN (*aside to Lady Goodbody*).

For heaven's sake, ma'am, give this up! you'll put me beside myself.

LADY GOODBODY (*aside to Miss Martin*).

You're a fool, and don't know when one is serving you.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*to Miss Martin*).

There is nothing can be said in your praise, madam, that will not be readily credited; but to prefer country retirement, and a bachelor past the

noon of his days, is a singular taste for a young and gay woman.

MISS MARTIN.

Perhaps it is so : but unluckily it is one to which I make not the smallest pretensions. I love the amusements of town to a folly ; retirement is irksome to me ; and I hate a capricious old——(*stopping short as if shocked at herself, with great embarrassment.*)

LADY GOODBODY (*very angrily*).

Miss Martin : how can you be so perverse !

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Pray, my dear madam, let us not fall out about this foolish jest which we have kept up too long. Here comes a strange original old fellow who is in the custom of amusing us a little after dinner, but he forgets that there are ladies with us at present.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pray let him come, we shall be glad to hear him talk a little.

Enter DAVID.

DAVID (*to* Sir John).

A good afternoon to your honour.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

How do you do, my honest friend David ?

DAVID.

As well as a dry mouth and an empty head will allow a poor silly fellow like me to be.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Ay, David, wise men always speak modestly of themselves, tho' they don't insist upon every body believing them. Here is something for thy dry mouth; you must drink a bumper to the ladies' healths.

DAVID.

Such ladies as these deserve bumpers a-piece to their healths.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

So they do; and here's the first for you.

(Filling him a glass.)

DAVID *(drinking)*.

My humble respects to your Ladyship.

(To Lady Goodbody.)

LADY GOODBODY.

I'm proud of the respect of so wise a man, Mr. David.

DAVID.

O Lord, madam, why should I be held in any account? What tho' a body may have a better understanding of things, and a better way of setting

his words in order, as it were, than another; 'tis all but the gift of God, and why should a body be proud of it?

MISS MARTIN.

But folks will be proud of any gift, Mr. David, unless they be endued, like you, with the rare gift of modesty also.

DAVID.

Faith, young lady, you're in the rights of it there. Here's to your very good health: here's to your secret inclinations.

MISS MARTIN.

I thank you; but you are waggish as well as wise.

DAVID.

O yes, madam! nothing comes amiss to me. After I have been talking, mehap of the Pope, or the Emperor, or the land-tax, or the solemn league and covenant, I can just go and break my jests among the women as if I were no better than one of themselves.

MISS MARTIN.

How wonderfully condescending to the poor silly women!

DAVID.

O yes, madam, I have no pride about me: I can just talk like one of themselves. (*Drinking to*

Hannah.) My service to you, young lady. (*Raising his voice.*) Yes, yes, commend me to the women: they don't envy any little wit that one may have. But conscience, I care for the face of no man! (*Looking at Amaryllis.*) Some of them, mehap, have read more books than me, and can tell you the Latin for one word and the Greek for another, and the likes o' that; but for good deep sense, and a knack at a comparison, I'll defy the best of them all. Ods dickens! I could find ye out a similitude for the sun, moon, and stars, in the paring of a black pudding's end. *Laughing without, and Will's head seen peeping at the door which David had left ajar.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

What's that?

DAVID.

By my troth, I've forgot my errand! I have brought the poor girl who sings so well to divert your honours, and she is waiting at the door with some ill-manner'd companions along with her.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pray bring her in, we shall be glad to have a song from her.

(*David goes to the door, and leading in Sally, shuts it in Will's face with great indignation.*)

DAVID (*to Sally*),

Come in, huffey, and let those sneering varlets

amuse themselves. Sing the ladies one of your new songs.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I believe they would rather have one of your old ones.

SALLY.

Will you please to have the Sailor's Courtship to the Tinker's Daughter; or, "My tatter'd Hose and clouted Shoon?"

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I rather think the clouted shoon will do best.

SONG.

*Tho' richer swains thy love pursue,
In Sunday geer, and bonnets new;
And ev'ry fair before thee lay
Their silken gifts with colours gay;
They love thee not, alas! so well
As one who sighs and dares not tell;
Who haunts thy dwelling, night and noon
In tatter'd hose and clouted shoon.*

*I grieve not for my wayward lot,
My empty folds, my roofless cot;
Nor hateful pity proudly shown,
Nor alter'd looks, nor friendship flown;
Nor yet my dog with lanken sides,
Who by his master still abides;
But how will Nan prefer my boon,
In tatter'd hose and clouted shoon!*

MISS MARTIN.

She has a charming voice, and sings with some skill.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Who taught you these songs, Sally?

SALLY.

My father, sir; he's a fid——

DAVID (*pinching her arm aside.*)

Fiddler an't genteel; say he's a musicianer.

SALLY.

He's a musicianer, sir.

(*Worshipton laughs impertinently, and stares at Sally, who keeps retiring in confusion as he still continues to stare, and at last runs out.*)

DAVID.

Is the sheep-faced fool gone?

(*Exit after her in great indignation.*)

WORSHIPTON (*to Amaryllis.*)

Let us go and coax her to return.

(*Exit Worshipton and Amaryllis.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

She is very young, and we must excuse her,

LADY GOODBODY.

There are more people here than her who ought to plead the same excuse. Miss Martin, you have behaved very strangely, and can only be pardoned on account of your youth.

MISS MARTIN.

I have done so many foolish things for six-and-twenty years past, that you are really very good, my dear madam, to pardon me on that score.

LADY GOODBODY.

What do you mean? what do you mean, child, by calling yourself older than you are?

MISS MARTIN.

I have been of age these five years, and most people, I believe, will call that six-and-twenty.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Your servant, ladies, we shall meet again at the tea-table. *(Exit.*

LADY GOODBODY.

Very well, very well, Miss Martin! since you will be six-and-twenty, tho' you know well enough you want two months and a half of it, with all my heart. But allow me to tell you, a maiden of that age should look pretty sharply about her if she would not still remain a lonely maiden all her life.

MISS MARTIN.

I am sure it were better to remain a lonely maiden all my life than take up with such pitiful company as some of your good matrons do, and rather more respectable too.

LADY GOODBODY.

No, child; a married woman is always more respectable than a single one, let her be married to whom she will.

MISS MARTIN.

Indeed! Can one give to another what he is not possess'd of himself? Can a woman receive any additional respectability because some drivelling, insignificant man, whom all the world despises, has put a wedding-ring upon her finger!—ha! ha! ha! But I suppose a good settlement is the honour your Ladyship means.

LADY GOODBODY.

No, indeed: I say, every married woman is more respectable than a single one, independently of all settlements. What else do you think would have induced me, with the fortune I had, to marry Sir Benjamin Goodbody? for his person was disagreeable, and his best friends admitted he was no conjurer. Don't mistake me, however, I mean no disrespect to his memory. He was a very good man, and I have lamented him sincerely. And what else

do you think would have induced my cousin Frances to give her hand to that poor puny creature, Mr. Perewinkle, but to place herself in this respectable state.

MISS MARTIN.

Ha! ha! ha! I did not expect to hear such strong examples quoted from my own family.

LADY GOODBODY.

Don't make a jest of it: I speak seriously, and you ought to think seriously.

MISS MARTIN.

I think very seriously that, if you would not pester me continually with attempts to make up a match for me with every man of fortune that falls in our way, I should be very happy, my dear aunt, to live still with you, and take care of your declining years, in return for the tenderness and attention you have bestowed on my youth. Why would you put me away from you? are you tired of my company?

LADY GOODBODY.

Oh, Mary! talk not of taking care of my declining years: I should be contented to be crippled or bed-ridden all my life, could I but see you happily and honourably married,

MISS MARTIN (*kissing Lady Goodbody's hand tenderly*).

My dear aunt! pardon my petulance and eager-

ness. I will strive to please you more : but do give up the present pursuit, I beseech you.

LADY GOODBODY.

No, no, my dear ! I love you too well for that. But I am unfit to say any thing to you at present.

(Exit.)

MISS MARTIN *(looking after her.)*

My dear, kind, perverse aunt ! you will be the death of me. *(To Hannah.)* Come, my dear, we'll retire to our rooms too. What have you been thinking of all this time ?

HANNAH.

I have just been wondering whether my grandmother was christened Hannah or Hanabella,

MISS MARTIN.

What puts that into your head ?

HANNAH.

Because Mr. Worshipton said at dinner, when my aunt call'd me Hannah, that she should have call'd me Hanabella, which is a prettier name.

MISS MARTIN.

Mr. Worshipton has been amusing himself.—Oh heigh ho ! I wish we were at home again, in our old mansion in the north.

Enter HOPKINS.

HOPKINS (*gently putting her hand on Miss Martin's shoulder*).
Shoulder).

My dear child! pardon the liberty: I still feel for you the affection of a dry nurse: what is the matter with you?

MISS MARTIN.

Still the old grievance, my dear Hopkins; my aunt trying to make up a match for me.

HOPKINS.

Ay, poor good lady: she can't leave that alone for the soul of her. She would make up matches at home for every country girl in the neighbourhood if she could. I even believe, if I had not been once married already, which she thinks sufficient for the credit of any woman, she would still be for trying to make up a match for my old crazy bones, God help me!—But don't let it vex you thus, my dear ma'am: I have brought you something that will please and divert you.

MISS MARTIN.

What is that, Hopkins?

HOPKINS.

A letter from my little boy whom my lady puts to school, written with his own hand, dear little

fellow! and the first he ever wrote in his life. It begins "Dear Mother," and all as pretty as any other letter.

MISS MARTIN.

I thank you, my good Hoppy! I shall indeed have a pleasure in reading it. Go with me to my room, and shew it me there: it does my ill-humour good to see thee so happy; I will strive to think less of my own concerns. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE II. *A small room leading to other rooms in the house: Jenkins discovered standing at one of the doors, behind which hang great coats, &c. beckoning to somebody who does not appear; presently enters Worshipton, stepping upon tiptoe.*

WORSHIPTON.

Thou hast some intelligence for me?

(In a low voice.)

JENKINS.

Yes; the old lady and her woman are coming this way presently to go to Miss Martin's room, and the heiress will follow them as soon as she can find a glove that she is searching for. I heard this just now as I listen'd at her door; so conceal yourself here amongst these great coats for a few minutes, and you may way-lay her as she passes.

(Speaking in a half whisper.)

WORSHIPTON.

Is my uncle still reading in the next chamber?

JENKINS.

I believe so. (*Going to a door at the bottom of the stage, and listening.*) He is just now rising to go away. (*Worshipton shrinks back, and is going hastily out.*) No, no! don't be afraid; he is gone out the other way to visit old Rycroft, I suppose.

WORSHIPTON (*speaking in a loud voice*).

Good then: we shall have the coast clear: let us hide ourselves. Thou must remain with me, for I may have occasion for thee.

(*Hide themselves amongst the great coats.*)

Enter LADY GOODBODY and HOPKINS, talking as they enter.

LADY GOODBODY (*in rather a low voice*).

Very true, Hopkins, and if my god-daughter turns out an industrious girl, I'll add something to what she saves myself, to get her a husband; for you know she is not very flighty.

HOPKINS (*in a loud voice, having lingered some paces behind to pick up something she has dropt*).

Ay, there is plenty of husbands to be had, my Lady, tho' a girl be ever so homely, if she have but money enough. (*Exeunt Lady Goodbody and Hopkins.*)

WORSHIPTON (*behind the door*).

Ay, they are talking of their heiress now. They are devilishly suspicious of designs upon her, but we'll jockey them for all that. Ha! here comes the game.

Enter HANNAH (and Worshipton comes from his concealment).

HANNAH.

O la! are you there, Mr. Worshipton? I saw nobody here but the great coats hanging by the wall.

WORSHIPTON.

You are not offended, I hope, that a great coat should be turned into something that can speak to you, and gaze upon you, and admire you, Miss Clodpate.

(*Ogling her.*)

HANNAH.

La, now! it is so droll!

JENKINS (*peeping from his hiding-place*).

Droll enough, by my faith!

WORSHIPTON.

I have been waiting here concealed a long time for this happiness; for your aunt is so jealous I can

find no opportunity of speaking to you. She knows well enough it is impossible to behold such beauty and attraction without———pardon me: you know very well what I would say to you if I durst.

HANNAH.

La, no! how should I know. Do you mean that I am beautiful, and what d'ye call it?

WORSHIPTON.

Indeed I do: your beauty must be admired, tho' your prudent aunt does all she can to conceal it.

HANNAH.

La, now! you say so because my hair has been allowed to grow so long, and aunt and every body says that my ears are the prettiest thing about me. But it an't aunt's fault: I shall have it cut when we go to town. (*Putting her hair behind her ears awkwardly with her fingers, and beginning to look rather brisk.*)

WORSHIPTON (*looking at them with affected admiration.*)

O, beautiful indeed!

JENKINS (*peeping from his hiding-place*).

Ay, I thought the beauty lay hid under some snug covert or other: it was devilishly well conceal'd by my faith!

HANNAH.

La, now! did you think they were as pretty as they are?

WORSHIPTON.

I must confess I should have expected to find them somewhat of a longer shape. But conceal them for pity's sake, my charming Hannah: this is dangerous.

HANNAH.

Hanabella, you know.

WORSHIPTON.

O yes, Hanabella I mean. It is dangerous to look upon so much beauty, when one at the same time thinks of the extraordinary accomplishments of your mind.

HANNAH.

La, now! who has told you that I got by heart six whole parts of the hundred and nineteenth psalm, word for word, in the space of two mornings only, and every body said it was very extraordinary? Somebody has told it you I know.

WORSHIPTON.

No, nobody; I just found it out myself.

HANNAH.

La, now! that is so wonderful! Aunt herself

said that my cousin Martin could not have done it so well.

WORSHIPTON.

Your cousin Martin! would any one compare you together? Don't you know how much every body is delighted with you?

HANNAH.

La, no! nobody tells me any thing about it.

WORSHIPTON.

Indeed! that is very extraordinary: but they have their own ends in that. Don't they watch you, and keep always somebody near you?

HANNAH.

To be sure my aunt often desires my cousin to take care of me when we go out.

WORSHIPTON.

I thought so.—Ah! my charming Hanabella!
(Sighs two or three times, but she continues staring vacantly, without taking any notice of it.)

JENKINS *(aside to Worshipton as he walks near his hiding place, rather at a loss what to do).*

Give a good heavy grunt, sir, and she'll ask what's the matter with you: mere fighting is no more to her than the blowing of your nose.

WORSHIPTON (*ogling Hannah, and giving a groan*).
Oh! oh!

HANNAH.

La! what is the matter with you? have you the stomach ach? My aunt can cure that.

WORSHIPTON.

Nay, my dear Hanabella, it is yourself that must cure me. I have got the heart-ach. It is your pity I must implore. (*Kneeling and taking her hand.*)

HANNAH.

O, sure now! to see you kneeling so—it is so droll! I don't know what to say, it is so droll.

WORSHIPTON.

Say that you will be mine, and make me happy: there is nothing a lover can do, that I will not do to please you.

HANNAH.

Miss Languish's lover made songs upon her.

WORSHIPTON.

I'll do so too, or any thing: but don't let your aunt know that I have spoken to you, she would be so angry.

HANNAH.

O no! she is very fond of people being married.

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, but she will be angry at us tho'; so don't tell her, nor Miss Martin, nor any body a word of the matter. Do promise this, my charming Hana-bella! my life depends upon it. (*Kneeling again, and taking her hand.*) O don't pull away from me this fair hand!

HANNAH.

La! I'm sure I an't pulling it away.

WORSHIPTON (*starting up suddenly from his knees*).

There's somebody coming. (*Runs out and leaves Hannah strangely bewildered, and not knowing where to run.*)

HANNAH.

O dear, dear! what shall I do!

Enter HOPKINS.

HOPKINS.

What is the matter, Miss Clodpate? My Lady sent me to see what is become of you: are you frightened for any thing, that you keep standing here in such a strange manner?

HANNAH.

O la, no! but I just thought somehow, that you would think there was somebody with me. (*Hopkins looks about the room suspiciously.*) O no: you

need not look for any body: those are only great coats by the wall, you see; and Mr. Worshipton's an't there, you see; for his has got five capes to it, and the cloth is of a much lighter colour, and it has got more button-holes to it too than any body's else in the house.

HOPKINS (*still staring strangely about*).

Mr. Worshipton's! was he here?

HANNAH.

La, no! an't I just telling you that he an't here?

HOPKINS (*aside*).

Well this is droll enough too—but no, no! it can't be any thing neither. (*Aloud.*) Your aunt is impatient for you, Miss Clodpate.

HANNAH.

O la! I'm going to her directly.

(*Exeunt Hannah and Hopkins.*)

JENKINS (*coming forward from his hiding-place, and shrugging up his shoulders as he looks after Hannah*).

This is the price my master is willing to pay for his curricule and his horses.

Re-enter WORSHIPTON.

WORSHIPTON.

I think we have done pretty well, Jenkins, for the first onset.

JENKINS.

Yes to be sure, sir ; but—but—

WORSHIPTON.

But what, Jenkins ?

JENKINS.

Pardon my freedom, sir :—but don't you think she is rather too great a fool for ——

WORSHIPTON.

Poh ! poh ! poh ! she is all the better for that : it is a great advantage, and one that I am certain of.

JENKINS.

As to the certainty of it nobody will dispute that, I believe.

WORSHIPTON.

Don't trouble thy head about it, if I'm satisfied. And remember the caution I gave you to say nothing, in the way of asking questions at the servants, to lead them to suspect what we are about.

JENKINS.

Don't be afraid of that, sir : I can't if I would ; for the man-servant that attends them is a country booby, who has not been in the family a fortnight, and knows nothing at all about it ; and my Lady's woman, with her staunch old-fashion'd notions, has

taken such a dislike to me that I hate to have any thing to say to her.

WORSHIPTON.

So much the better. Yes, yes! things will go swimmingly on: I shall soon jockey them all.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE III. *A chamber all littered over with books, papers, old coats, shoes, &c. &c. Amaryllis discovered sitting by a table with a pen in his hand, and paper before him. After musing some time, he writes and then blots out what he has written.*

AMARYLLIS *(to himself)*.

This won't do: it does not sound well. What a teasing thing it is, when one has got a beautiful line, to be stopp'd thus for want of a good rhyme to couple with it! *(repeating with great emphasis and gesticulation)*

“ On thy ideal pinions let me fly,

“ High-soaring Fancy, far above the sky :

“ Beyond the starry sphere towering sublime,

“ Where vulgar thought hath never dar'd to—

No, climb does not please me: it is too heavy a motion for thought. *(Musing and rubbing his forehead.)*

“ Beyond all thought inspiring vulgar rhyme.”

No, that won't do neither. *(Musing again and biting his nails.)* Pest take it! if I should bite my

fingers to the quick it won't come to me. (*A gentle knock at the door.*) Who's there? (*in an angry voice.*)

DOLLY (*half opening the door*).

'Tis I, sir; does your fire want coals?

AMARYLLIS (*in a softened voice*).

O, it is you, Dolly. Come in and see, my good girl. (*Enter DOLLY, and pretends to be busy in putting the room in order, whilst Amaryllis takes his pen and begins several times to write, but as often lays it down again, looking at the same time over his shoulder at her.*) Plague take it! she puts it all out of my head. (*Leans his arm on the table for some time, still looking frequently about to her.*) Faith, I believe she has a sneaking kindness for me, she finds always so many little things to do in my room. She's a good, rosy, tight girl, on my soul! (*Aside.*) No, my pretty Dolly, that book is too heavy for you: I'll put it in its place. (*Getting up with great animation and running to her.*)

DOLLY.

O no, sir! I'll do it very well myself. I just thought, as how your room would be in confusion, and so ——

AMARYLLIS.

And so you came to put my head into confusion too, you little baggage.

DOLLY.

O fure! I hope not, fir.

AMARYLLIS.

You're a fly gipsy, Dolly. But you think of me sometimes then, eh? (*Pinching her ear and patting her cheek.*)

WORSHIPTON (*without*).

Amaryllis! Amaryllis! are you at home, Amaryllis?

Amaryllis runs back to his table again, and pretends to be writing, without attending to the inkstand and several books which he oversets in his haste, whilst Dolly makes her escape by the opposite door just as Worshipton enters.)

WORSHIPTON.

I heard you were at home, so I made bold to enter. What, writing so composedly after all this devil of a noise?

AMARYLLIS (*looking up with affected apathy*).

Yes, I believe the cat has been playing her gambols amongst my books.

WORSHIPTON.

It may have been the cat, to be sure, for those creatures have witchcraft about them, and can do many wonderful things o' winter nights, as

my old nurse used to tell me; but if you had told me it was half a dozen of dogs that made such a noise, I should scarcely have believed you. Cats too can put on what forms they please, I've been told; and tho' they generally assume that of an old woman, your's has been more civil to you, I believe, in taking the more agreeable form of a young one. I caught a glimpse of her, Amaryllis, as she fled into the other chamber.

AMARYLLIS.

Poh! Dolly has been putting my books in order: is she gone? *(Pretending to look round for her.)*

WORSHIPTON.

Well, well, never mind it! I came on a little business to you, else I should have been sorry to disturb you; for I know well enough you are always employed about some sublime thing or other.

AMARYLLIS.

You are too flattering.—You come upon business?

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, Amaryllis, and you are so good-natured, that I shan't make any preamble about it. I want to please a lady, or make a lady believe I am pleased with her, which is the same thing, you know; and I want to borrow one of your poems that I may present it to her as written in praise of

herself. However, she is not very refined in her taste, any common-place thing will do.

AMARYLLIS.

I am infinitely flatter'd, Mr. Worshipton, that you should apply to me for a common-place thing. Since this is the style of poetry that suits you at present, I can't help thinking you might have succeeded pretty well in writing it yourself.

WORSHIPTON.

Poh, now! you don't take my meaning. I meant any little piece that has cost you little time or study, will do very well for my purpose: I should be very sorry to take one of your good ones.

AMARYLLIS.

Sir, I have bestowed some time and study upon all my pieces, and should be rather unwilling to think I had any other to offer you.

WORSHIPTON.

How perverse you are in misunderstanding me! The best poet that ever lived has a best and a worst poem, and I only make the humble request to have one of your least sublime ones. Do, my dear friend, look thro' your budget. Many of your works, I know, are master-pieces, and I have had a great desire for a long time to hear you read some of them, but was unwilling to disturb you of an evening.

AMARYLLIS (*softened*).

I believe I must find something for you. Will you have a love-song or a sonnet?

WORSHIPTON.

Any of them will do; she does not know the one from the other.

AMARYLLIS (*taking papers from his table*).

Here are verses addressed to Delia playing on the lute.

WORSHIPTON (*taking it*).

This will do very well; for tho' I don't believe she plays upon the lute, it will be civil to suppose that she does, till we really know the contrary.

AMARYLLIS.

You speak lightly of the lady, Worshipton, for a lover.

WORSHIPTON.

I am not so refined in my ideas of these matters as you are, Amaryllis. I am a man of the world, and that character can't be supported long on a slender fortune: the lady is very rich.—But mum: not a word of this to any one.

AMARYLLIS.

You may depend upon me. But you said you should like to hear me read some of my poems. I

am not very busy at present; I will indulge you with pleasure.

WORSHIPTON.

You are extremely obliging.—For a man pretty well received by women of the first circles, as I believe without vanity I may say of myself, it would be a silly trick to marry at all, did not my circumstances compel me to it; but I shall make such a choice of a wife as shall make me pass as much as possible for a single man still.

AMARYLLIS (*impatiently*).

Very well!—I have a poem here which I think you will be pleased with.

WORSHIPTON.

You are very good indeed.—But you see how I am circumstanced: I must have fortune.—How foolish it was in the Marchioness of Edgemore to think I was going to elope with Lady Susan! I never paid more than common attention to her in my life. It is impossible for me to marry without fortune.

AMARYLLIS (*still more impatient*).

Well that is all very true.—But here is a pastoral which you will not, I hope, find unworthy your attention, if you will have the goodness to give it me.

WORSHIPTON.

You are infinitely obliging ; but I am extremely sorry my time will not at present allow me so great a pleasure.

AMARYLLIS.

Then I'll read you this elegy, which is shorter.

WORSHIPTON.

I'm really obliged to you, but —

AMARYLLIS.

Or perhaps you would like to hear my grand ode, which is in the next room. (*Runs out to fetch it.*)

WORSHIPTON (*alone*).

How that man pesters one with his damned vanity. Shall I make my escape while he is gone? No, no! that would be too rude: I'll try another way of getting off.—Worshipton! Worshipton! (*Calling out with a feigned voice.*)

Re-enter AMARYLLIS, *with his poem in his hand.*

AMARYLLIS.

Now, Worshipton, I'll shew you what I believe, without vanity, I may call hitting off the figurative and sublime style in poetry, pretty well.

WORSHIPTON.

I beg pardon: I am extremely mortified, but I cannot possibly stay to hear it now, for Sir John

waits without calling for me, and I must positively go to him. Did you not hear him call very loud?

AMARYLLIS.

O, if Sir John is without we can ask him in, and he shall hear it too. (*Going towards the door.*)

WORSHIPTON (*stopping him eagerly*).

No, no, my good friend, not now, if you please: it is impossible: we shall hear you another time.

AMARYLLIS.

I shall be at home all the evening; shall I expect you half an hour hence?

WORSHIPTON.

No, not quite so soon, I thank you; we shall be engaged. But we shall have great pleasure very soon—good bye to you. (*Hurrying away.*)

AMARYLLIS (*stopping him*).

In an hour then, perhaps, I may expect you: I shall be at leisure all the evening.

WORSHIPTON.

Really you are most exceedingly obliging, but I am afraid it will not be in our power. Excuse my haste, I am very much disappointed. (*Going hastily.*)

AMARYLLIS (*stopping him again.*)

Nay, surely after supper you can contrive to come to me.

WORSHIPTON.

O, no, no! one has enough to do then to digest the horrible eating of this diabolical inn, without forfeiting one's self—I beg pardon! without giving one's self the pleasure, I meant to say, of ——— excuse me! excuse me! I must not keep him waiting any longer; you heard how loud he call'd me: I am extremely disappointed indeed.

(Exit, breaking from him in great haste.)

AMARYLLIS *(looking after him angrily.)*

Well, let him go, pitiful fellow! he is so taken up with himself and his own little paltry vanity, he has neither capacity nor taste to relish high poetry.

(Exit very majestically.)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

A dark narrow passage-room, with the door of an adjoining chamber left open, in which are discovered Lady Goodbody, Miss Martin, and Hannah.

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *and* WORSHIPTON.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

THE light is gone out : let us wait here till David brings us another candle. Ha ! is it fair to wait here ?
(*Perceiving the ladies.*)

LADY GOODBODY (*within to Miss Martin*).

Indeed, Mary, you ought to consider yourself as very fortunate in having the opportunity of pleasing an agreeable man.

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

Mr. Worshipton do you mean ?

WORSHIPTON (*in a low voice, stealing eagerly nearer the door*).

They are talking of me, dear creatures ; let us hear what they have to say upon this subject.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Fye, Worshipton ! would you turn eve-dropper ?

P

LADY GOODBODY. (*within*).

No, you know well enough it is Sir John I mean.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*drawing also near the door*).

Ha! talking of me too. Well, if people will converse with their doors open, there is no help for it.

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

How should I know who your Ladyship means by an agreeable man?

LADY GOODBODY.

You may know at least who I do not mean; for that poor frivolous fine gentleman can be agreeable to nobody.

WORSHIPTON (*aside to himself*).

Old hag! her face is as senseless and as coarse as a red-topped January turnip.

LADY GOODBODY (*within*).

Sir John is a man that any woman might like. He is a man of fortune.

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

So is our neighbour, Squire Numbscull.

LADY GOODBODY (*within*).

Fye, child! Sir John is a well-made man, and—

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

And so I must like him for not being crooked.

LADY GOODBODY (*within*).

You are both perverse and foolish. Sir John—

MISS MARTIN (*within earnestly*).

If you have any love for me, aunt, drop this subject for ever: the very mention of his name is distressing to me.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*in a low voice, turning from the door quickly*).

You need not be so vehement, fair lady: I have no intention to give you the smallest trouble.

LADY GOODBODY (*within*).

I leave you to your own humours, Miss Martin; you have got beyond all bearing with your nonsense.
(*Exit into an inner chamber.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I thought her sensible, I confess; but how confoundedly pert and flippant she has become.
(*Aside on the front of the stage.*)

WORSHIPTON (*going to him conceitedly*).

You seem disturbed, Sir John.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Not a jot! not a jot, truly! It rather amuses me.

Enter DAVID with a candle, holding his spread hand before it as if to prevent it from blowing out.

DAVID.

I should have brought the candle sooner, but I have but a short memory, your honour (*to Sir John*), and a man with a short memory is like a—

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

No matter what he's like: go on with the light, and we'll follow thee. (*Exit David, looking very foolish.*) That fellow has become nauseous with his families. (*As they are going out Worshipton stops Sir John.*)

WORSHIPTON.

They speak again; do stop here a moment.

HANNAH (*within*).

Would it grieve you, cousin, if my aunt were to propose Mr. Worshipton to you instead of Sir John?

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

No, my dear, not at all.

WORSHIPTON (*in a low voice*).

You see I am in favour with the niece, Sir John, tho' the aunt gives the preference to you.

HANNAH (*within*).

I thought as much, for he's a very pretty gentleman, isn't he?

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

He is even so.

HANNAH (*within*).

And he dresses so pretty and new fashion'd, don't he?

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

It is very true.

HANNAH (*within*).

And then he talks so clever, like the fine captain that run off with Miss Money. He is as clever every bit, altho' he don't swear so much; an't he, Mary?

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

I make no doubt of it. And had Lady Goodbody laid her snare to catch him for me, it would not have grieved me at all.

WORSHIPTON (*in triumph*),

Do you hear that, Sir John?

HANNAH (*within*).

It would not have grieved you at all?

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

No, my dear; for with all these precious qualities of his, his good or bad opinion is of no consequence to me. I could bear such a creature to suppose I have designs upon him, without being uneasy about the matter. (*Walking up and down disturbed,*

and then talking to herself.) To appear to Sir John Hazelwood as a female fortune hunter, endeavouring to draw in a wealthy husband for her own convenience—O, it is not to be endured! To be degraded in the eyes of the very man whose good opinion I should most value—it is enough to make one distracted!

(Worshippton retires behind Sir John very foolishly, who remains fixed to the spot with surprise.)

HANNAH *(within)*.

Do you love Sir John?

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

No, my dear, I am not weak enough to do that, when I know I shall never be beloved again. Could I have gained his good opinion, I should have been contented, without pretending to his heart.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(vehemently)*.

But thou shalt have both, by this blessed hour!

MISS MARTIN *(within)*.

But now, as my aunt carries on her attack, I don't know how to maintain my credit: I shall be compelled to be downrightly rude to him.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Ay, very right, very right, my brave girl!—It is a glorious girl! I adore her for her spirit.

HANNAH (*within*).

It gets very cold : I'll shut the door now, for the smoke is all gone.

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

What, has the door been standing open all this while?

HANNAH (*within*).

Didn't you see me open it to let out the smoke?

MISS MARTIN (*within*).

I am so harassed and vexed I don't see what is before mine eyes : shut it directly.

(*Hannah shuts the door*).

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

We are dark now, but I hear David's footsteps in the passage. Poor fellow ! I have affronted him. David ! friend David !

(*Calling.*)

Re-enter DAVID *with a light, looking very sour.*

DAVID.

What do you want, sir?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

To be lighted to our rooms, my good David.—Nay, don't look so grave, man. I spoke rather shortly to you, indeed, because I was thinking of something else at the time ; but you are too wise,

my good David, to mind such small trifles as these.

DAVID (*with his face brightening*).

Lord love you, sir! I have both given and taken short words ere now; that is nothing to me. But I wish I may remember to call your honour in the morning, for as I was a saying, a man with a short memory——

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Yes, yes, let us have it all now, as we go along; and put this under your pillow to prevent you from over-sleeping yourself, my friend David.

(*Giving him money.*)

DAVID.

O Lord, sir, I can't refuse any thing your honour offers me, but there is no occasion for this.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Put it in your pocket, man: there is a virtue in it. (*They move on; Sir John following David, and Worshipton kicking his shins from side to side, with affected carelessness, as he goes after them.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*archly turning as he goes out*).

Thou'rt making a strange noise with thy feet, Worshipton. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. Worshipton's chamber.

Enter WORSHIPTON, calling as he enters.

WORSHIPTON.

Jenkins! Jenkins!

JENKINS (*without*),

Here, sir.

Enter JENKINS in his great coat and boots.

WORSHIPTON.

Are you ready to set off for this same license?

JENKINS.

Yes, sir, in a moment.

WORSHIPTON.

Well, make good speed then: there is no time to lose. Remember all the directions and precautions I have given you: and think as thou goest along that thou art working for thyself as well as me, for thy services shall be nobly rewarded. Thou shalt have a slice out of Sir Rowland that will fatten thee up by and by into a man of some consequence. Good speed to thee, my good Jenkins! and use thy discretion in every thing.—Hast thou bespoke music for our serenade?

JENKINS.

I have found a forry fiddler, who has got but three strings to his violin, for the fourth is supplied

by a bit of pack-thread; and an old Highland piper, who has stopped here on his way from London to Lochaber; besides a bear-leader, who is going about the country with his hurdy-gurdy,

WORSHIPTON.

Well, well! if they make but noise enough it will do. But the most important thing is to have the chaise in waiting behind the old mill, that while the music is dinning in the ears of the old lady and her woman, we may convey our prize to it without being suspected. Have you engaged Will in our interest? and does he say the road between this and Middleton church is now passable?

JENKINS.

You may depend upon him, sir, and the road too.

WORSHIPTON.

Thou art sure I may depend upon him?

JENKINS.

Sure of it, sir. He will do much, he says, to serve your honour, but he'll go thro' fire and water to vex the old beldame. Lady Goodbody he means: he owes her a turn, I believe, for a half-crown she scrubbed off him when she paid him for the last stage he drove her.

WORSHIPTON.

This is fortunate. Where is Sir John just now?

JENKINS.

With old Rycroft: he always gives him his draughts with his own hand, lest it should be neglected.

WORSHIPTON.

Then I may go to the stable without danger, and have some conversation with Will myself. By the bye I have never visited that old sick devil yet; do you tell him that I enquire for him sometimes?

JENKINS.

I do, sir, and Rycroft don't expect more from you.

WORSHIPTON.

Very well, that is enough.—But we lose time. Here is money for thee: set off immediately.

(Jenkins receives money and exit.)

WORSHIPTON *(alone)*.

If this succeeds now, it will be a devilish lucky turn in my fortune; for I should have found it a difficult matter to have lived much longer upon credit. *(Musing a while.)* I wish after all it were a less expensive thing to be a man of fashion. Gold, as the proverb says, may be bought too dear.—No, no: it can't be bought too dear by one who knows how to spend it with spirit. I shall, at least, have every thing my own way, for she is a great fool; that is one good thing we are sure of. *(Exit.)*

SCENE III. *A passage or outer room.*

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD, *looking eagerly to the opposite side of the stage.*

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Here comes a lady, but not the one I'm in wait for.

Enter HANNAH.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Good morning, Miss Clodpate, I hope your morning dreams have not been unpleasant: you are early up.

HANNAH.

I mistook the hour when the clock struck, for it is a queer-sounding clock they have here, and don't strike at all like the one we have at home.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Good young ladies like every thing at home best.

HANNAH.

Yes indeed I do, for it was made by Mr. Pendlam, the great clock-maker in London. Isn't he clock-maker to the king?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Indeed I don't know ma'am.—But what pretty gloves you have got, Miss Clodpate; aren't they of a particular colour?

HANNAH.

La! do you think them pretty? My aunt says they are not pretty, but I think they are, and that was the reason why I bought them.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

And an excellent one too, madam. Pray when did you see your worthy father, Sir Rowland? I hope he enjoys as good spirits as he used to do long ago?

HANNAH.

I saw him the twenty-fourth of last September; and he was very well, I thank you, sir.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Does he never leave home now?

HANNAH.

O, there is Miss Martin coming; I must go away.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

And why must you go?

HANNAH.

Because my aunt says —— in case you should have any thing to say to her.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You are perfectly right to do whatever your aunt desires you. *(Exit Hannah.)*

Enter MISS MARTIN by the opposite side, Sir John looking at her with great satisfaction as she approaches. She curtsies slightly, continuing to pass on.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Good morning, madam.

MISS MARTIN.

Good morning, sir.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Do you pass me so hastily, Miss Martin? To run away so were enough to put it into a vain person's head to believe himself dangerous.

MISS MARTIN.

Perhaps then, yours is not without that idea.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Yet I ought not to be flatter'd by it neither; for women, it is said, fly from small dangers, and encounter the greater more willingly.

MISS MARTIN.

Yes, Sir John, we are the reverse of the men in this respect, which accounts likewise for your detaining me here.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Nay, in this you are mistaken: it is no mean danger that proves my boldness at this moment.

(Placing himself between her and the door gayly.)

MISS MARTIN.

Your boldness indeed is obvious enough, whatever I may think of your courage.—But I have no particular desire to pass this way: I can find out my way to the breakfast-room by another door if you have any fancy for standing sentry at this post.
(*Turning to go by another door.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*quitting the door*).

And you will leave me thus scornfully. There is an old proverb I could repeat about woman's scorn.

MISS MARTIN.

I know your old proverb perfectly well, Sir John; and I am obliged to you for mentioning it at present, since it sets me completely at liberty, without ill manners, to say, I am heartily tired of this parley.
(*Exit with affected carelessness.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well, this is strange enough! she will charm me, I believe, with every thing that is disagreeable to me: for I dislike a gay woman, I can't endure a talking one, and these kind of snip-snap answers I detest.—But I have been too particular in my notions about these matters: I have always been too severe upon the women:—I verily believe they are better kind of creatures than I took them for.—

Softly, however! I will observe her well before I declare myself. (*Exit.*)

Enter AMARYLLIS, with a coat in his hand, and dressed in his night-gown.

AMARYLLIS (*alone*).

What a plague is the matter with the string of my bell this morning that it won't ring! I wish my Dolly would come and brush this coat for me. (*Listening.*) I hear her voice coming up stairs; she'll be here immediately. — This girl becomes every day more pleasing and more necessary to me. Ever since I entered this house she has aired my linen, set my slippers by the fire in a morning (for, good soul! she heard me complain that I am troubled with a chillness in my feet), and done all those little kindly offices about me with such a native grace as beggars all refinement. — But what, indeed, are the embellishments of artful manners to the graces of simple unadorned nature? — She is at hand. — Dolly! my sweet Dolly!

(*Calling to her.*)

DOLLY (*without.*)

Coming, sir.

AMARYLLIS.

There is something of natural harmony in the very tones of her voice.

DOLLY (*without, in a sharp angry key*).

Get down to the kitchen, you vile abominable cur! Do you think I have nothing to do but mop the flairs after your dirty feet? Get down to the kitchen with you! (*The howling of a dog heard without.*) Yes, yes, howl away there! I'll break every bone in your skin, if you come this way again, that I will.

Enter DOLLY.

AMARYLLIS.

Why Dolly, my good girl, this is rather an unpretty way of talking.

DOLLY.

'Tis but the dog, fir. Vile, nasty hound! he is worfer than his master.

AMARYLLIS.

Than his master?

DOLLY.

Yes, than his master, Mr. Worshipton. His dog's tricks are like his own, for he don't care what trouble he gives to a poor servant.

AMARYLLIS.

So you don't love Mr. Worshipton, Dolly? Should you have treated a dog of mine so, eh? (*pinching her cheek kindly.*) You smile at that question, you gipsy: I know you would not.

DOLLY.

I should indeed have had some more regard for the brute, so as he had belonged to your honour.

AMARYLLIS.

I thank you, my sweet girl, but you ought to speak gently to every thing.—And don't call me "your honour." I don't like to hear my pretty Dolly call me so.

DOLLY.

O daisy! what shall I call you then?

AMARYLLIS.

Call me Sir, or Mr. Amaryllis, or when you would be very kind to me, my dear Mr. Amaryllis.

DOLLY.

My dear Mr. Amarals.

AMARYLLIS.

Amaryllis is my name, Dolly.

DOLLY.

Yes, yes! I know your name is Amarals.

AMARYLLIS.

No, child, Amaryllis.—But you'll pronounce it better by and by. And if my Dolly will take this coat and brush it for me, when she brings it to my

chamber again, I have something to say to her in private which will not, I hope, be displeasing to her.
(*Exit, looking tenderly at her.*)

DOLLY (*alone*).

What can he have to say to me now? Ods dickens! I'll wager he means to buy me a new gown.—Faith! he means some other thing perhaps. Well, if he were not so much taken up with his books, and his papers, and his poetry, and such trash, I should like mightily to keep a maid of my own, and be call'd Mrs. Amarals.—I'll bring it to this if I can. (*Going out with the coat.*) He shall brush his own coat then, howsomever. (*Exit.*)

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Moon-light: a field or small court behind the inn, and every thing covered with snow.*

Enter FIDDLER, PIPER, and HURDY-GURDY-MAN, each with his instrument.

FIDDLER.

How devilish cold 'tis! 'tis well we are fortified with roast beef and brandy, friend: didn't I tell you we should want it all? *(To Piper.)*

PIPER.

Very true: but you would not keep a lady of family and condition waiting till we cramm'd ourselves, Maister John.

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

Dat would be impolite in verite.

FIDDLER.

Damn me! 'if I would play with an empty stomach to the best lady in Christendom. What the devil makes her fancy that our music will sound better in this here cold field than within doors in such a night as this? I likes to be snug myself, and I never likes to put any one to hardship.

PIPER.

Why thou art a good-humour'd, kindly-hearted fellow, John ; I must say that for thee. - But this is the true way for all love music, di na ye ken ? Out among the high rocks, or under a castle-wall, man !—But now, as we are all to play thegither, as it were in a concert (*taking out his snuff-box, and rapping on the lid with an air of importance*), di na ye think, gentlemen, it will be expedient to enquire first, whether we can play the same tunes or not, as I suppose none of us trouble ourselves with music-books, and sick like.

FIDDLER.

I can play a pretty many tunes, Piper, but none of them all goes so well on my fiddle as Ally Croaker.

PIPER.

Ay, that is good enough in town to play to an orange-woman under a lamp-post, or sick like ; but this is a lady of family, man, and she must have something above the vulgar.

FIDDLER.

Play any thing you please, then : it will be all the same thing in my day's work whether I play one thing or another.

PIPER.

Day's work, man! you talk about playing on your fiddle as a cobbler would do about mending of shoes. No, no! we'll do the thing decently and creditably.

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

Suppose we do give her de little chanson d'amour?

PIPER.

Song a moor! what's that?

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

I do play it very pretty on my hurdy-gurdy.

PIPER.

Ay, you may play it well enough, perhaps, for your Italian foreigners, or sick like, that don't know any better; but any body that has been in Lochabar, good troth! would count it no better than jargon, man.

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

But I do say when de peoples of my country hear your pipe, dey do so. (*Stopping his ears, and mimicking one who runs away.*) And I do say dat I play more better music dan you, one, two, ten, twenty times over.

PIPER.

Lord help ye, man ! it's lang sin pride began :
will ye compare yourself to the Laird of M^cRory's
piper.

FIDDLER.

A great affair to be sure of the Laird of Mac-
Rory's piper.

PIPER.

You mun eat a bow o' meal before you be like
him tho'.

FIDDLER.

Thank God ! I have more christian-like victuals
to eat.

PIPER.

Better than you or your grandfather either, ha'
been glad o' worse fare.

FIDDLER.

Yes, that may be the case in your country like
enough, where, unless it be a lousy taylor, or sick
like (*mimicking him*), few of you taste any thing
that has ever had life in it.

PIPER.

Sir, an' it were not for respect to the lady yonder
(*pointing to the window where Hannah appears*), I

would run this dirk into that nasty bulk of yours, and let out some o' the plum-pudding you pretend to be stuffed with, you swine that you are!

FIDDLER.

O never mind the lady, Master M^cRory; I'll box you for two-pence. (*Putting himself in a boxing posture.*)

PIPER.

Done, sir, for half the money. (*Putting himself in the same posture.*)

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

Dese men very foolish: my hurdy-gurdy and I be but strangers in dis country: we will keep out of de way. (*Retiring to a corner of the stage.*)

Enter WORSHIPTON and JENKINS.

WORSHIPTON.

Hold, hold! what is all this for? I hired you to give us harmony and not discord, and be damn'd to you!

FIDDLER.

You shall have that too, an' please your honour.

WORSHIPTON.

But I want no more than I bargained for, so keep this for some other occasion, if you please.

FIDDLER (*giving up*).

Well, it don't signify, I can pick a quarrel with him another time.

PIPER (*to Fiddler*).

Since the gentleman desires it, fir, I shall let you alone for this time ; but damn you, fir, if you say a word against my country again, I'll make you a man of no country at all. (*They take up their instruments, and go to different sides of the stage, still making signs of defiance to one another.*)

WORSHIPTON (*going to the window*).

Are you there, my charming love ?

HANNAH.

Yes, I have been here some time.

WORSHIPTON.

I could not come sooner.—Remember your promise ; and in the mean time what music shall they play ?

HANNAH.

Just let them play a concert.

WORSHIPTON.

A concert,—Well, gentlemen, you are desired to play a concert.

FIDDLER.

That is to say we are all to play together. What shall we play? (*To Piper.*) Shall we play the Lady's Fancy?

PIPER.

A custock for the Lady's Fancy.

FIDDLER.

The Soldier's Delight then?

PIPER.

A ——— for the Soldier's Delight! a tune for a two-penny alehouse.

HURDY-GURDY-MAN.

Don't mind him (*to Fiddler*), he be washpish: you and I will play Ma chere Amie.

PIPER.

Well, well! play what you please, both of you, but I'll play the battle of Killy Cranky, and hang me, if your "Ah Me" will be heard any more than the chirping of a cricket in the hearth. (*They begin to play, and the Piper drowns them both with his noise.*)

WORSHIPTON (*stopping his ears*).

Give over! give over! blebs my soul! the squeaking of a hundred pigs and the fow-driver at

their heels is nothing to this. (*Going to the window.*)
Well, my love, how did you like the concert?

HANNAH (*above*).

Very well, I thank you.

WORSHIPTON (*aside*).

A lady of precious taste! (*aside.*) But would it not be better to hear them one at a time? Which of them shall I desire to play first? (*Aloud.*)

HANNAH (*above*).

Bid that fiddler there, without the breeches, play me a tune on his bagpipes.

PIPER.

I must let you to wit, madam, that I am no fiddler, and the meanest man of all the M^cRorys would scorn to be a fiddler. My father before me was piper to the laird, and my grandfather was piper to the Highland Watch at the siege of Quibec; and if he had not piped long and well to them, madam, there wad ha' been less French blood spilt that day, let me tell you that, madam.

WORSHIPTON.

My good Mr. M^cRory, she meant you no offence, I assure you she respects your grandfather very much. Do oblige us with a tune on your bagpipes.

(*Piper makes a profound bow, and standing by the side scene, half concealed, plays a Highland pee-bro.*)

WORSHIPTON (*to Piper*).

I thank you, sir; your music is excellent: it is both martial and plaintive.—But where is our little warbler? Ha! here she comes.

Enter SALLY.

Come, my good girl, can you sing the song I gave you?

SALLY.

Yes, sir.

WORSHIPTON.

Let us have it then.

SONG.

*Ah, Celia, beauteous, heavenly maid!
In pity to thy shepherd's heart,
Thus by thy fatal charms betray'd,
The gentle balm of hope impart.*

*Ah! give me hope in accents sweet,
Sweet as thy lute's melodious strain;
I'll lay my laurels at thy feet,
And bless the hour that gave me pain.*

WORSHIPTON.

Very well sung, indeed. (*To Hannah.*) Don't you think, my charming Hannah, we have had music enough?

HANNAH.

Just as you please : I don't care.

WORSHIPTON.

I'll send them off then. (*To Jenkins, who comes forward.*) Take them all to the other side of the house, and make them play under Miss Martin's window. You understand. (*Aside.*)

JENKINS.

Yes, sir. (*Exeunt Jenkins and music, and enter Will, who retires to a corner of the stage.*)

WORSHIPTON (*to Hannah*).

How did you like my song, Hanabella?

HANNAH.

Very well : but la ! it an't the song you promised to make upon me : it don't say one word about either you or I.

WORSHIPTON.

Ay, but it does tho' ; for you are Celia, and I am the shepherd, and that is the fashion of love-songs.

HANNAH.

Well, that is so droll !

WORSHIPTON.

So it is.—And now, my dearest creature, fulfil

your promise, and come over the window to me ; the postchaife is waiting for us.

HANNAH.

La ! is it the yellow chaife that stands commonly in the yard ?

WORSHIPTON.

I can't tell you what colour it is, but it carries us off to be married. Come over the window, my love.

HANNAH.

La ! I didn't promise to go over the window : Aunt says they never do good who get over the window to be married : I only promised to run off with you.

WORSHIPTON.

But that is just the same thing. Do come now ! there is no time to be lost. You have only to set your foot upon that stone which juts out from the wall, and you are in my arms in an instant.

HANNAH.

No, no ! old aunt Gertrude went over the window to be married, and she fell and broke her leg, and never was married at all.

WORSHIPTON.

But you can't break your leg here, the wall is so low.—Come, come, there is no time to lose.

HANNAH.

O no, no! I know I shall come to harm.

WORSHIPTON.

Do, my dearest Hanabella, there is not the least danger. *(In a coaxing tone of voice.)*

HANNAH.

O no, no! aunt Gertrude broke her leg, and I'm sure I shall break mine too.

WORSHIPTON *(losing all patience)*.

Damn your aunt Gertrude, and all the fools of the family! I'll give you leave to cut my head off if you fall.

HANNAH.

I'll go away, I won't stay here to be damned.
(Whimpering, and turning from the window).

WORSHIPTON.

Forgive me, my love; don't go away: I'll do any thing to please you.—What the devil shall we do?

WILL *(coming forward)*.

Don't press the lady to get over the window, sir; I'll find a way of getting her out at the door, which I shall explain to you afterwards.

WORSHIPTON.

But her chamber enters thro' the old lady's ; so how can you get her out ?

WILL.

By unkennelling the old lady, to be sure ; I'll do that fast enough.

WORSHIPTON (*to Hannah*).

Then wait in your chamber, my dearest creature, till we come for you. (*Aside as he goes off with Will.*) What a devil of a fool it is ! who could have thought she would have been so obstinate. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. *A small Hall, with the doors of several rooms opening into it.*

Enter WORSHIPTON, and WILL *with a candle and burnt paper in his hand.*

WILL (*thrusting the burnt paper under one of the doors*).

Now, my good Lady Charity ! I'll be even with you for the half-crown you saved off me.—She'll smell the burning soon enough, I warrant ye ; for your notable ladies, like her, poke their noses into every corner, and get out of bed at every little noise, to see that no rat be running off with one of their old shoes.—Do you go, please your honour,

and wait at that door there, which is the only one that opens to the staircase, and I'll send the young lady to you immediately. You told her our plan?

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, I returned to the window, and told her.

WILL.

I have procured a trusty lad to drive in my place, and you'll find every thing as you ordered it.

WORSHIPTON.

I thank you, my good fellow: I'll make your fortune for this.

WILL.

I know your honour is a noble-minded gentleman. *(Exit Worshipton.)*

WILL *(alone, listening at the door)*.

Yes, yes, she smells it now: I hear her stirring. *(Bawling very loud.)* Fire! fire! fire! The house is on fire! Fire! fire! fire!

Enter LADY GOODBODY *in her night-clothes, followed by Hannah.*

LADY GOODBODY.

Mercy on us! how strong I smell it here! Where are all the servants? Call every body up. *(Exit Hannah by the staircase door.)* Is that the way out? Stay, Hannah, and take me with you.

R

WILL.

Your Ladyship had better take hold of my arm, and I'll take you safe out.

LADY GOODBODY.

Do take me out! do take me out! Fire! fire! fire! is there nobody coming to us? (*Takes hold of Will's arm, who staggers along with her first to one side of the stage, and then to the other.*) Why, what are you about, fellow? I'll get better along by myself.

WILL.

Never fear! never fear! I'll warrant I'll take care of your Ladyship.

LADY GOODBODY.

Why don't you go faster then? Let go my arm, I say. Is the fellow mad or drunk?

WILL.

I'll take care of your Ladyship. Old ladies are often a stumbling: take good care of your feet, madam.

LADY GOODBODY.

Look to your own feet, fool! and let me alone. The man's distracted! let go my arm, I say. (*She struggles to get free: he keeps fast hold of her, and hobbles zig-zag over the stage, she all the while calling*

out fire, till they get to the staircase door, where he falls down with his body right across the door to prevent its opening, as if he were in a fit.) Heaven preserve us! the man's in a fit, and the door won't open. Who's there? Fire! fire! fire!

Enter LANDLADY and DOLLY.

LANDLADY.

Fire in my house, mercy on us! how strong it smells here. O lud! lud! I'm a ruin'd woman! Where can it have broke out? O lud! lud!

DOLLY.

Lack-a-daisy! I smell it over head. I'll pawn my life it is in the north garret, where my new gown lies. O dear! O dear!

LANDLADY (*running distractedly about*).

Fire! fire! Water! water! will nobody assist a poor ruined woman? Oh, all my good furniture! Oh, my new dimity bed!

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD in his night-gown.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Confound your new dimity bed! Where is Miss Martin?

LADY GOODBODY.

O my child! my child! where is my child?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I'll go for her.—But here she comes: all's well now; let it burn as it will. (*Enter Miss MARTIN, and Sir John runs eagerly up to her, but stops short suddenly.*) My old sick fellow is in bed, and can't stir a limb to save himself; I must carry him out in my arms. (*Going hastily out, but is stopped by Amaryllis, who enters grotesquely dressed in his nightcap.*)

AMARYLLIS.

Where are you going? where has it broke out?

LANDLADY.

O lud, sir! it is broke out up stairs, and all my goods will be burnt. Who will assist a poor ruin'd woman?

AMARYLLIS.

There is no fire up stairs, I assure you, but I smell it here.

LANDLADY.

Then it is down stairs, and we shall all be burnt before we can get out. (*They all crowd about the staircase door.*) Raise that great fellow there.

LADY GOODBODY.

He's in a strong hyfterick fit.

DOLLY.

Give him a kick o' the guts, and that will cure his extericks.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

A hasty remedy, gentle-maiden.

(*Sir John and Amaryllis lift Will neck and heels from the door.*)

Enter DAVID from the staircase.

DAVID.

Who stopped the door there? what's all this bustle for?

LANDLADY.

O, David, David! isn't there fire below stairs, David?

DAVID.

Yes, as much as will roast an egg, if you blow it well.

LANDLADY.

Nay, but I'm sure the house is on fire, for I dreamt this very night that Pompey's whelp was gnawing a hole in my apron, and that bodes me no good. I'll go and look all over the house. Come, Doll.

(*Exeunt Landlady and Dolly.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*to Amaryllis*).

We had better search too.

(*Exeunt Sir John and Amaryllis.*)

DAVID.

What's the matter with Will?

LADY GOODBODY.

He's in a strong fit.

DAVID.

I never knew him in one before: I'm afraid he's dead, poor fellow! What will become of old Grizel his mother now? He gave the best half of his earnings to keep her out of the workhouse.

LADY GOODBODY.

Did he indeed! good young man! Run and get assistance for him. But, happen what will, old Grizel shan't go to the workhouse, for I'll take care of her myself. Haste, good David! run for the apothecary directly. (*Exit David.*) Go, Mary, fetch me some drops from my room. (*Exit Miss Martin.*) Poor young man!

WILL (*getting up, and falling on his knees to Lady Goodbody*).

O, my good blessed lady! I'm a Jew, and a Turk, and a Judas Iscariot. I have played the knave with you all this while out of spite. If I had not been a beast I might have known that you were a main good, charitable lady.—But I'll fetch her back again: I'll run to the world's end to serve you.

LADY GOODBODY.

You are raving, I fear : who will you fetch back ?

WILL.

The great heiress, your niece, madam, who is run off to marry Mr. Worshipton, and all by my cursed contrivance too.

LADY GOODBODY.

The great heiress, my niece !

WILL.

Yes, my lady ; your niece, Miss Clodpate : but I'll fetch her back again, tho' every bone in my skin should be broken.

LADY GOODBODY.

This is strange, indeed ! (*Considering a while.*) No, no, young man, don't go after her : she is of age, and may do as she pleases.

WILL.

Ods my life, you are the best good lady alive ! I'll run and tell my old mother what a lady you are.

LADY GOODBODY.

Nay, I'll go and see her myself ; I may be able to make her situation more comfortable, perhaps.

WILL (*bursting into tears*).

Thank you, madam! Heaven knows I thank you! but as long as I have health and these two hands, I'll take care of her who took care of me before I could take care of myself.

LADY GOODBODY.

You are a good young man, I see, and I have a great mind to take care of you both. She has brought you soberly up, I hope, and taught you to read your Bible.

WILL.

O Lord, madam! old Grizel can't read a word herself, but many a time she desires me to be good—and so I will: hang me if I don't read the Bible from beginning to end, hard names and altogether!

LADY GOODBODY.

Come into the parlour with me: you must tell me more of this story of Mr. Worshipton and my niece.

Re-enter MISS MARTIN with the drops.

MISS MARTIN.

I fought them every where, and thought I should never ———

LADY GOODBODY.

We don't want them now; carry them back again. (*Exeunt Lady Goodbody and Will by one side, and Miss Martin by the other.*)

SCENE III. *The Inn Yard, with the stable-door in front, at which Will appears, as if ready to saddle a horse.*

Enter AMARYLLIS.

AMARYLLIS.

I hear, Will, you are going by Lady Goodbody's orders to desire the young couple to return to her from church: I should be much obliged to you if you would take Dorothea behind you, for she has got some business in the village this morning, and there is no conveyance for her unless you take her up.

WILL.

What, our Doll do you mean?

AMARYLLIS.

Yes, Will.

WILL.

Hang her! let her walk: Blackberry won't carry double.

AMARYLLIS.

I am sure he will, if you try him.

WILL.

Why should I hobble all the way with a fat wench behind me? She's able enough to walk.

AMARYLLIS.

Don't be so ill-natured now : she would not be so to you if she could serve you.

WILL.

No, to be sure : as far as a kick o' the guts goes to cure one of the extericks, kindly christian ! she will be ready enough with her service.

AMARYLLIS.

Come, come ! don't be so crusty now. Here is money for you ; Blackberry must carry double.

(Giving him money.)

WILL.

Ay, to be sure, if I coax him well, I don't know but he may : for tho' he is but a brute he has as many odd humours about him as any reasonable creature.

AMARYLLIS.

Do, my good fellow, and put a soft pillion under her, for the road is very rough.

WILL.

Nay, hang me if I do that ! she an't so delicate, good sooth !—Let her be ready to set off in ten

minutes, if she means to come, for I won't wait an instant for the first madam in England. A soft pillion for her truly! (*Grumbling as he goes into the stable.*)

AMARYLLIS (*alone.*)

He has been my rival, I see, by his spite. But no wonder! my charming girl must have many admirers. (*Exit.*)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The Kitchen. Landlady discovered going up and down, busy with her family affairs, and David with two countrymen, drinking a pot of beer together.*

FIRST MAN (*drinking*).

My farvice to you, David.

DAVID (*drinking*).

And here's to your very good health, Master Simons. But as I was a saying, if I were 'Squire Haretop, d'ye see, I would look after mine own affairs, and not let myself be eaten up by a parcel of greedy spendthrifts and wandering newsmongers. I would look after mine own affairs, d'ye see, that is what I would.

SECOND MAN.

To be sure, David, it would be all the better for him, if so be that he were in the humour to think so.

DAVID.

Ay, to be sure it would, Master Gubbins. For this now is what I have always said, and advised, and commented, and expounded to every body, that a man who don't look after his own affairs,

is, at the best, but a filly colt that strews about his own fodder.

LANDLADY.

Lord help ye, David ! would any one think to hear you talk, now, that you had been once the master of this inn, and all by neglecting of your own concerns are come to be the servant at last.

DAVID (*with great contempt*).

Does the filly woman think, because I did not mind every gill of gin, and pint of twopenny fold in the house, that I could not have managed my own concerns in a higher line ? If my parents had done by me as they ought to have done, Master Simons, and had let me follow out my learning, as I was inclined to do, there is no knowing what I might have been. Ods life ! I might have been a clerk to the king, or mayhap an archbishop by this time.

(*A knocking at the door, Landlady opens it, and enter two Farmers.*)

FIRST FARMER.

Is Dolly within ?

LANDLADY.

No, she is gone a little way a-field this morning about some errands of her own.

SECOND FARMER.

That is a pity now, for we bring her such rare news.

LANDLADY.

Lack-a-daify! what can that be?

SECOND FARMER.

Her uncle, the grazier, is dead at last; and tho' he would never allow her a penny in his lifetime, as you well know, he has died without a will, and every thing that he has comes to Dolly.

FIRST FARMER.

Ay, by my faith! as good ten thousand pounds, when house and stock, and all is disposed of, as any body would wish to have the handling of.

LANDLADY.

Ten thousand pounds! how some people are born to be lucky! A poor woman like me may labour all her life long, and never make the twentieth part of it.

Enter SALLY.

Come hither, Sally: did Doll tell you where she was going this morning?

SALLY.

No, but I can guess well enough; for she is all

dress'd in white, and I know it is to Middleton church to be married to that there gentleman that writes all the songs and the metre.

LANDLADY.

'Tis lucky it's no worse. Step into the parlour, firs, and I'll come to you presently. (*Exeunt Farmers and Sally different ways.*) What luck some people have! married to a gentleman too! fortune makes a lady of her at once.

DAVID.

By my faith! and fortune has been in great want of stuff for that purpose when she could light upon nothing better than Doll. They lack'd of fish to make a dish that filled their pan with tadpoles.

LANDLADY.

Don't be so spiteful, now, David; some folks must be low in this world, and others must be high.

DAVID.

Yes, truly, she'll be high enough. Give some folks an inch and they'll take an ell; let fortune make her a lady, and she'll reckon herself a countess, I warrant ye.—Lord help us! I think I see her now, in all her stuff silks and her great bobbing top-knots, holding up her head as grand and as grave as a cat looking out of a window.—Foh! it were enough to make a body sick.

LANDLADY.

Fy, David! you are as spiteful now as if somebody were taking something out of your pocket: I'll assure you she has a more genteeler behaviour than most young women in the parish: I have given her some lessons myself.

DAVID.

Ay, by my faith! and her gentility smacks devilishly of the place that she got it from.

Re-enter SALLY in great haste.

SALLY.

Lack-a-daify! I went to the stable just now to tell Will about Dolly's great fortune; and he is gone, and Blackberry is gone, and the chaise and horses are gone.

LANDLADY.

There is witchcraft about this house!—I'll pawn my life some of the gentlefolks are missing too; let us go and see. *(Exit.)*

SCENE II. *Enter* LADY GOODBODY, Miss MARTIN, *and* SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(speaking as he enters.)*

I am heartily sorry for it: my nephew alone is to blame, and he will be severely punished for his

fault.—You expect them to return when the ceremony is over : we shall see them soon then.

LADY GOODBODY.

I dare say we shall : and in the mean time let us drop this disagreeable subject.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Forgive me, Lady Goodbody, for appearing to regret so much the honour of connecting my family with yours.

LADY GOODBODY.

Indeed, Sir John, I could have wished to have received that honour from another party. Your nephew, however, sets you a good example in marrying, tho' I'm afraid it will be lost upon you.

MISS MARTIN (*fretfully*).

Your Ladyship has teased Sir John so often upon this subject, that, if he has any spirit at all, he will certainly remain a bachelor from mere contradiction.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Yes, Miss Martin, that is a motive urged with authority by those who recommend it from experience. Nay so greatly, it is said, do young ladies delight in it, that every thing they do ought to be explained by the rule of opposition. When they

frown upon us it is a smile of invitation; when they avoid us it is a signal to stand upon the watch for a *tete-a-tete*; (*approaching her with an arch smile as she draws herself up with an affected indifference.*) but when they toss back their heads at our approach, in all the studied carelessness of contempt, we may consider ourselves as at the very pinnacle of favour. Is it allowable, madam, to take this rule for my guide?

MISS MARTIN.

By all means, Sir John; self-love will naturally teach you to judge by that rule which proves most for your own advantage. I hope, however, you will allow those unlucky men upon whom we bestow our smiles, to find out another for themselves.

LADY GOODBODY (*to Miss Martin, displeased*).

You have got a sharp disagreeable way of talking of late, which is not at all becoming, child: you used to smile and look good-humoured to every body.

MISS MARTIN.

And so I may again, madam, when I am with the poor silly folks who don't know how humiliating it is for them to be so treated: I hope I shall always be civil enough to spare Sir John Hazelwood that mortification. (*Making him an affected and ironical curtesy.*)

LADY GOODBODY (*peevishly*).

Let us have no more of this!—Sir John, I shall now give up teasing you about matrimony. I see you are incorrigible.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Then you see further than I do, madam, for I rather think it possible I may be persuaded to enter into it at last.

LADY GOODBODY.

I'm sure I most earnestly wish it for your own sake; and so confident am I of your making an excellent husband, that I would even venture to recommend you to the dearest relation I have.

MISS MARTIN (*aside, breaking away from them suddenly, and hurrying to the other end of the room.*)

At it again! I can bear this no longer.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*to Lady Goodbody.*)

You see, madam, this conversation is interesting only to you and me: had I not then better make love to your ladyship?

LADY GOODBODY.

Why there was a time, Sir John, when I was not without admirers.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

How much I should have liked—but it would have been a dangerous gratification—to have seen these attractions in their full strength which are still so powerful in their decline.

LADY GOODBODY.

There is still a good likeness of me, as I was in those days, which Mary now wears upon her arm : whilst I go to give some orders to my woman, make her pull off her glove and shew it to you. You'll have the sight of a very pretty hand and arm by the bye; our family is remarkable for pretty hands.
(*Exit.*)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*going up to Miss Martin*).

May I presume, madam, thus authorized, to beg you will have the condescension to gratify me.

MISS MARTIN.

I can't possibly : It is not on my arm at present.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Nay, but I see the mark of it through your glove : may I presume to assist you in pulling it off? (*Offering to take hold of her glove, whilst she puts away his hand with great displeasure.*)

MISS MARTIN.

You presume indeed : I can't suffer it to be pulled off.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Then I must indeed be presumptuous, for positively I will see it. (*Taking hold of her hand, whilst she, struggling to pull it away from him without effect, at last, in her distress, gives him with the other hand a good box on the ear, and then, bursting into tears, throws herself into the next chair, and covers her face with both her hands.*) My dear Miss Martin forgive me! I fear I have behaved ungenerously to you: but believe me, careless as I may have appeared, I have beheld you with the most passionate admiration. (*Kneeling at her feet.*)

MISS MARTIN (*turning from him disdainfully*).

Get up, Sir John, and find out some amusement more becoming your understanding and your years.

(*Walks to the bottom of the stage with assumed dignity, whilst Sir John sits down much agitated on a chair on the front: she, turning round, perceives his agitation, and forgetting her displeasure, runs up to him eagerly.*)

MISS MARTIN.

Good heaven! is it possible that you are thus affected. What is it that disturbs you so much?

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

A very foolish distress, madam, but it will not long disturb me.

MISS MARTIN.

I hope it will not.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Nay, it shall not, madam.—First when I beheld you, I was weak enough to think that I discovered in an assemblage of features by no means (pardon me) particularly handsome, as many worthy and agreeable qualities as would have been unpardonable in the most ardent physiognomist. I saw thro' the weak designs of your aunt, and applauded your delicacy and spirit. I will confess, that passing by the door of your apartment the other night, as it stood open, I heard you mention me to your cousin in a way that completely ensnared me. I was foolish enough to believe I had at last found a woman in whose keeping I might entrust my happiness. But it was a weakness in me : I see my folly now ; and this is the last time I shall be the sport of vain capricious woman.

MISS MARTIN.

Is it possible!—Oh, we have both been deceived! I have been deceived by something very far different from vanity—my wounded pride still whispering to me that I was the object of your ridicule: and you have been deceived by a physiognomy that has indeed told you untruly when it ventured to promise any thing more from me than the ordinary good qualities and disposition of my sex.—

We have both been deceived ; but let us part good friends : and when I am at any time inclined to be out of humour with myself, the recollection that I have been, even for a few deceitful moments, the object of your partiality, will be soothing to me.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*catching hold of her as she goes away*).

No, madam, we must not part. (*Looking stedfastly and seriously in her face.*) Can you, Miss Martin, for once lay aside the silly forms of womanship, and answer me a plain question upon which the happiness of my life depends? Does your heart indeed bear me that true regard which would make you become the willing partner of my way thro' life, tho' I promise not that it shall be a flowery path, for my temper and habits are particular.

MISS MARTIN.

Indeed, Sir John, you address me in so strange a way, that I don't know what I ought to say.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Eye upon it! I expected a simple, I had almost said a manly answer, from you now. (*Pauses, expecting an answer from her, whilst she remains silent and embarrassed.*) No, I see it is impossible: the woman works within you still, and will not suffer you to be honest. Well, I'll try another method

with you. (*Taking her hand and grasping it firmly.*) If you do not withdraw from me this precious hand, I shall suppose you return me the answer I desire, and retain it as my own for ever.

MISS MARTIN.

Why, you have hurt it so much in that foolish struggle, that you have not left it power to withdraw itself.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Now, fye upon thee again! this is a filly and affected answer. But let it pass: I find notwithstanding all my particular notions upon these matters, I must e'en take thee as thou art with all thy faults. (*Kissing her hand devoutly.*)

MISS MARTIN.

I think I hear Worshipton's voice.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Ah, my poor miserable bridegroom of a nephew! I must be angry with him now, and I know not at present how to be angry.

Enter WORSHIPTON *and* HANNAH.

WORSHIPTON.

My dear uncle, I crave your blessing.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I think, sir, it would become you better, in the first place, to crave my pardon.

WORSHIPTON.

The world makes great allowance, my good sir, for young men of fashion in my situation ; knowing us to be of a free, careless, and liberal disposition, it calls us not strictly to account in matters of elopement.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

A liberal disposition ! No, sir ; more selfish than the miser who hides his hoarded gold in the earth. I wish you had made what is really right, and not what the world thinks allowable, the rule of your conduct.

WORSHIPTON.

I shan't argue with you about conduct, Sir John ; it is a devilish awkward word in a young fellow's mouth : but if you will do me the honour of visiting me in town next winter, I shall introduce you to such society and amusements as country gentlemen have not always the opportunity of knowing. You will, I doubt not, have more deference for the world when you are better acquainted with it.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

You are infinitely obliging, my most liberal sir.— And so this is all the apology you mean to offer for deceiving a young girl, and making her the victim of your frivolous and fantastical wants ?

WORSHIPTON.

No, no! I do mean to make an apology to the old lady.—Ha! ha! ha! tho' I can't help laughing when I think how I have cheated that wonderful piece of goodness and circumspection. I must coax her a little to bring round the old fellow, my father-in-law, for I must have a brace of thousands to begin with immediately.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Yes, you are perfectly right to make as much of him as you can. (Sir John *leans thoughtfully against the side scene, and Worshipton struts conceitedly up and down, whilst Miss Martin and Hannah come forward from the bottom of the stage, engaged in conversation.*)

HANNAH (*in a busy half-whisper*).

So you see, My dear Mary, you must just tell my aunt that he ran away with me, and I could not help it. For, O la! he is so in love with me you can't think! And do you know we were married by such a queer-looking man: he had fifteen holes in his cassock, for I counted them all over the time of the service. And do you know, when we came to the church door, Mr. Worshipton had never a ring to put upon my finger. And do you know he borrowed an old ugly silver one of a woman who sold ballads by the gate, and gave her half-a-guinea for it, tho' it is not worth a sixpence. But

I'm just as good a married woman, you know, for all that, as if it had been gold. (*Holding up her finger with the ring upon it.*) An't I?

MISS MARTIN.

I believe it will make no great difference.

HANNAH.

I thought so.—Now do speak to my aunt for me.

MISS MARTIN.

I certainly will, my dear Hannah, tho' you have played so fly with us.

HANNAH.

But la! don't tell her about the half guinea for the ring, for that would make her angrier than all the rest of it.—O lud! here she comes: stand before me a little bit. (*Shrinking behind Miss Martin's back.*)

Enter LADY GOODBODY.

LADY GOODBODY.

Well, Mr. Worshipton, what have you done with my niece?

WORSHIPTON.

There she is, madam. (*Hannah comes from behind backs, and makes Lady Goodbody an awkward frightened curtesy.*) We both come to beg your

forgiveness, and I hope she will not suffer in your ladyship's good opinion for the honour she has conferred upon your humble servant.

LADY GOODBODY.

He must be a very humble servant indeed who derives any honour from her.

WORSHIPTON.

We hoped from the message you were so obliging as to send us, that we should not find you very severe.

LADY GOODBODY.

I think, however, I may be allowed to express some displeasure at not being consulted in a matter so interesting to my family, without being considered as very severe.

WORSHIPTON (*aside to Sir John.*)

I only wonder she is not more angry with me. (*Aloud to Lady Goodbody.*) I was afraid, madam, of finding you unfavourable to my wishes, and durst not risk my happiness. But I hope you have no doubt of the honour of my intentions.

LADY GOODBODY.

Certainly; I cannot doubt of their being very honourable, and very disinterested also.—I have known men mean enough and selfish enough to possess themselves by secret elopements of the for-

tunes of unwary girls, whilst they have had nothing to give in return but indifference or contempt. Nay, I have heard of men so base as to take advantage of the weakness of a poor girl's intellects to accomplish the ungenerous purpose. But it is impossible to ascribe any but disinterested motives to you, Mr. Worshipton, as Miss Clodpate has but a very small fortune.

WORSHIPTON (*starting.*)

What do you mean, madam? the only child of your brother, Sir Rowland: you call'd her so yourself.

LADY GOODBODY.

I told you she was the only child of my brother by his wife Sophia Elmot; but disagreeable circumstances sometimes take place in the best families, which it goes against one's feelings to repeat; and there was no necessity for my telling you, in indifferent conversation, that he has married his own cook maid a year and a half ago, by whom he has two stout healthy boys.

(*Worshipton stands like one petrified for some time, but perceiving a smile upon Miss Martin's face, takes courage.*)

WORSHIPTON.

Come, come! this joke won't pass upon me: I'm not so easily played upon.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

It is a joke I'm afraid that will not make you merry, Worshipton.

WORSHIPTON.

I'll believe nobody but Hannah herself, for she can't be in the plot, and she is too simple to deceive me. (*To Hannah.*) Pray, my good girl, how many brothers have you got?

HANNAH.

La! only two; and one of them is called Rowland after my father, you know, and one of them little Johnny.

WORSHIPTON.

O, hang little Johnny, and the whole fools of the race! I am ruined beyond redemption.

(*Pacing up and down, and tossing about his arms in despair.*)

HANNAH (*going up to him.*)

La! Mr. Worshipton, what is the matter?

MISS MARTIN (*pulling her back.*)

Don't speak to him now.

LADY GOODBODY (*going up to him soothingly.*)

Don't be so much overcome, Mr. Worshipton; things are not so very desperate. Hannah will have

five thousand pounds at her father's death : he allows her the interest of it in the meantime, and I shall add two hundred a year to it. This, joined to your pay may, I think, with prudence and economy, enable you to live together in a very snug comfortable way.

WORSHIPTON.

Damn your snug comfortable ways of living! my soul abhors the idea of it. I'll pack up all I have in a nap sack first, and join the wild Indians in America.—I wish I had been in the bottomless ocean ere I had come to this accursed place.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Have a little patience, Worshipton, and hear my plan for you. I'll pay your debts ; you shall have the same income you had before, with more prudence perhaps to manage it well ; and your wife shall live with her friends in the country.

HANNAH.

No, but I'll live with mine own husband, for he knows well enough he is mine own husband.

(Taking hold of Worshipton, whilst he shakes her off in disgust.)

LADY GOODBODY.

How can you use your wife so, Mr. Worshipton!

HANNAH (*whimpering.*)

Oh! he don't love me! Oh dear me! he don't love me a bit!

WORSHIPTON.

What is the creature whimpering for? I shall run distracted!

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

For God sake be more calm! If you'll promise to live prudently in town, we shall manage your lady in the country for you. But remember, Edward, the first time I hear of your old habits returning upon you, she shall be sent to London to pay you a visit.

WORSHIPTON.

O dog that I am! and so this is all that I have made of my plots and my —— Idiot and fool that I am!

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Consider of it, Worshipton, and consider of it well.

WORSHIPTON.

I am distracted, and can consider of nothing.

*Enter AMARYLLIS, followed by DOLLY and LAND-
LADY.*

AMARYLLIS.

I am come to pay my compliments to you, Wor-

shipton, with all possible good will; I wish you and your fair bride joy, most cordially.

WORSHIPTON.

Nay, I wish you joy, Amaryllis.

AMARYLLIS.

Ha! who has been so officious as to tell you of my marriage already?

WORSHIPTON.

Married!—No, faith; I gave you joy because I thought you a bachelor still. Married! what a dog you have made of yourself!—But no; your refined, your angelic Delia has favoured your wishes at last, and with such a woman, you may indeed be a married man without being miserable.

LANDLADY (*to Worshipton*).

What did you say about Delia, sir? he is married to our Doll.

AMARYLLIS (*fretfully to Landlady*).

Who desired you to follow me here, ma'am?

LANDLADY.

It was your own wedded wife, sir, that desired me to come; and since you have chosen to marry the maid, I see no reason you have for to turn up your nose at the mistress. And you need not go for to

be ashamed of her neither: she is as clever a girl as ever whirled a mop, and as honest a girl too; and that is more than can be said for many a one that carries her head higher.

WORSHIPTON (*bursting into a laugh*).

Heaven and earth, Amaryllis! are you married to Mrs. Dolly?

AMARYLLIS.

Dorothea is a very good girl, Mr. Worshipton.

WORSHIPTON.

Yes, yes! I see 'tis even so. Ha! ha! ha! (*laughing violently for a long time, till he is obliged to hold both his sides.*) This is excellent! this is admirable! I thank thee Amaryllis! thou hast been playing the fool as well as myself. Give me thy hand, man.—Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD (*stepping forward, after having whispered some time behind backs with the Landlady*).

No, good nephew, moderate your laughter a little: Amaryllis has been playing the fool in a very different way from you; for he has married his bride without expecting one farthing with her, and learns on returning from church, as our good landlady has been informing me, that an uncle of hers

is just dead, who has left her a very handsome fortune.

(Worshipton, whose mirth stops in a moment, endeavours to resume the laugh again, but finding it wont do, retires in confusion to the bottom of the stage.)

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD *(to Amaryllis and Dolly)*.

Much happiness may you both have in your good fortune! With the woman of your choice and a competency, Amaryllis, you will be in the most favourable state of all others for courting the muses.

AMARYLLIS.

Yes, Sir John; with my own slender patrimony, and the fortune my wife brings to me, I hope to make my little cot no unfavoured haunt of the fair sisters. I am not the first poet who has been caught by the artless charms of a village maid; and my wife will have as much beauty in my eyes, dress'd in her russet gown, as the —

DOLLY.

But I won't wear a russet gown tho': I have money of my own, and I'll buy me silk ones.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Well said, Mrs. Amaryllis! Gentle poet, your village maid is a woman of spirit.

AMARYLLIS.

She is untaught, to be sure, and will sometimes speak unwittingly.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Never mind that, my good fir; we shall have her taught. You shall make my house your home till your cot is ready for you, where I soon hope to have a lady who will take some pains to form your charming Dorothea for her present situation.

LADY GOODBODY.

So you are to have a lady then? If you had told me so before, I might have spared all my arguments upon this subject.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Indeed, madam, you might have spared them, tho' they were very good ones, I confess: the sight of this lady (*taking Miss Martin's hand*) made every other argument unnecessary. I hope you will give me your blessing with her. I want but this, and will not enquire of you how many brothers she has.

LADY GOODBODY.

So my Mary has caught you after all. Thank God for it! She is good enough for any man, and I would rather give her to you than to any other man in the world. As for her brothers, she has but one, and he has increased instead of diminishing her fortune.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Talk no more of these things, I hate the very name of fortune at present.

LADY GOODBODY.

Pardon me; but I must tell you what my nephew Robert did: It may be good for another new-made nephew of mine to listen to it. (*Glancing a look to Worshipton.*) He and his sister were left orphans without any provision: I bought him a commission in the army; and with the addition of fifty pounds which I sent him every year on his birth-day, as a godmother's gift, he contrived to live respectably without debt, and was esteemed by his brother officers.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

I know it well: a friend of mine had the pleasure of knowing him abroad, where he served with distinction and honour.

LADY GOODBODY.

Yes, he was afterwards ordered abroad with his regiment, where he had it in his power to acquire a little money with integrity; the best part of which (three thousand pounds) he sent home to his sister immediately, that she might no longer be dependent even upon me; and it shall be paid down to you, Sir John, upon her wedding-day.

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

No; God forbid that a country gentleman should add to his ample income the well-earn'd pittance of a soldier! I will have nothing from the young hero

but the honour of being allied to him ; and what advantage may accrue, by the bye, to my family, by setting so fair an example to such members of it as may not have walked altogether in his footsteps.

WORSHIPTON.

Well, well, I understand you ; but tell me no more of your good-boy stories at present : this cross-fated day has taught me a powerful lesson which makes every other superfluous. (*Exeunt.*

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS;

OR

THE LAST OF THE CÆSARS:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS, *Emperor of the Greeks.*

MAHOMET, *the Turkish Sultan.*

OTHUS, *a learned Greek,*

RODRIGO, *a Genoese naval commander,*

JUSTINIANI, *a noble Genoese, and a soldier,*

PETRONIUS, } *Greeks, and secret agents of Ma-*
MARTHON, } *homet.*

OSMIR, *vizir to Mahomet.*

HEUGHO, *an old domestic officer of Constantine's.*

OTHORIC, *a rude but generous adventurer.*

Fortune-teller, Citizens, Attendants, &c.

WOMEN:

VALERIA, *wife of Constantine.*

ELLA, *daughter of Petronius.*

LUCIA, *a lady attendant on Valeria.*

Ladies and Attendants.

*The Scene in Constantinople, and in the camp of
Mahomet, near the City.*

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A large platform on the roof of the palace of Petronius, from which are seen spires and towers, and the broken roofs of houses, &c. with the general appearance of a ruined city, the distant parts involved in smoke. Ella is discovered with an attendant, standing on a balcony belonging to a small tower, rising from the side of the platform. As the curtain draws up the sound of artillery is heard.*

Enter OTHUS and MARTON.

OTHUS.

AH, see how sadly chang'd the prospect is
Since first from our high station we beheld
This dismal siege begin ! 'Midst level ruin,
Our city now shews but its batter'd towers,
Like the jagg'd bones of some huge animal,
Whose other parts the mould'ring hand of time
To dust resolves.

MARTHON (*coldly*).

It does indeed some faint resemblance hold
To what thou hast compar'd it to.—How is't
Art thou not from the walls ?

OTHUS.

No, not immediately.

MARTHON.

Wert thou not there when Mahomet's huge
cannon

Open'd its brazen mouth and spoke to us ?
How brook'd thine ears that deep tremendous
found ?

The coasts of Asia and th' Olympian heights,
Our land-begirded seas, and distant isles,
Spoke back to him again, in his own voice,
A deep and furly answer ; but our city,
This last imperial seat of Roman greatness :
This head of the world, this superb successor
Of the earth's mistress, where so many Cæsars
In proud successive lines have held their sway,
What answer sent she back ?

OTHUS.

Fye, hold thy tongue !

Methinks thou hast a pleasure in the thought.
This head o' the world—this superb successor
Of the earth's mistress, as thou vainly speak'st,
Stands midst these ages as in the wide ocean
The last spar'd fragment of a spacious land

That in some grand and awful ministration
Of mighty nature has ingulphed been,
Doth lift aloft its dark and rocky cliffs
O'er the wild waste around, and sadly frowns
In lonely majesty. But shame upon it!
Her feeble, worthless, and degen'rate sons —

MARTHON.

Yes, what say'st thou of them? they also are
The fragments of a brave and mighty race,
Left on this lonely rock.

OTHUS.

No, blast them! on its frowning sides they cluster
Like silly sea-fowl from their burrow'd holes,
Who, staring senseless on th' invaders toil,
Stretch out their worthless necks, and cry “caw!
caw!”

O, Paleologus! how art thou left,
Thou and thy little band of valiant friends,
To set your manly bosoms 'gainst the tide!
Ye are the last sparks of a wasted pyre
Which soon shall be trode out.—
We are the last green bough of an old oak,
Blasted and bare: the lovelier do ye seem
For its wan barrenness; but to its root
The axe is brought, and with it ye must fall.—
Ye are — O God! it grasps my swelling throat
To think of what ye are.

MARTHON.

A brave band, truly : —

But still our gallant emp'ror and his friends,
Oppos'd to Mah'met and his num'rous host
With all his warlike engines, are in truth
As if one tofs'd against the whirl'd-up sands
Of their Arabian plains, one grasp of dust.

OTHUS.

Yes, they are few in number, but they are
The essence and true spirit of their kind ;
The soul of thousands. A brave band they are,
Not levied by the power and wealth of states ;
And the best feelings of the human heart
Have been the agents of their princely chief,
Recruiting nobly. Virtuous Sympathy,
Who on the weaker and deserted side
His ample, lib'ral front doth ever range ;
Keen indignation, who, with clenched hand
And sternly-flashing eye, ever beholds
The high o'erbearing crest of proud oppression ;
And gen'rous Admiration, above all,
Of noble deeds, whose heav'n-enlighten'd smile,
And imitative motion, ever wake
With eager heart-throbs at the glorious fight
Of manly daring, have unto their numbers
Some score of dauntless spirits lately added ;
Such as would ride upon the whirlwind's back,
If it might be, and with Heaven's spearmen cope.

With such a band, methinks, all things are possible.

MARTHON (*smiling*).

Why, thou soft man of peace,
Who in gay banquets spend'st thy giddy nights,
And o'er some sculptur'd stone, or ancient lore,
Each idle morning wast'st in the cool shade,
Thou speakest with a bold and warlike voice!

OTHUS (*throwing back his cloak, and shewing under it a warlike garb, with the scarf and devices belonging to the imperial band*).

Ay, and wear'st too a bold and warlike form.
Behold what now I am! thou shrinkest back,
And lookest strangely on me: give thy lips
No friendly blessing to my new estate?

MARTHON.

Heaven blefs the brave!

OTHUS.

Amen! but thou art cold. (*Sound of artillery is heard again.*)

O hear that sound!

Doth it not stir thee as it thund'ring growls
Along the distant shore? (*Shaking his head.*)

It moves thee not.

Is that the sound of female voices near us?

MARTHON.

Yes; see'st thou not on yon high balcony

That pale and fearful maid ? her watchful ear
Is ever turn'd to ev'ry distant sound.

OTHUS.

My gentle kinswoman upon the watch !
I know for whom she fears ; nor do I marvel ;
For she was present on that crowded shore,
When Genoa's captain brought his gen'rous suc-
cour,
And saw the brave contention of those men,
In their proud vessels bearing boldly on,
With wavy pennants floating on the wind,
Whose armed sides, like a goodly bank,
Breasted the onward tide of opposition.

(Speaking with a great deal of appropriate gesture.)

No wonder that her fancy has been mov'd !
Oh, it did stir the women on our walls—
The infants—yea, the very household curs,
That from their kennels turn'd to look upon it !—
But for that motley crowd of moving things
Which we miscall our men——Nay, by the light,
Thou too dost hear me with a frozen eye !

Enter ELLA hastily from the balcony, and puts her hand eagerly upon the shoulder of OTHUS, who turns round surprised.

ELLA.

What sayest thou of him ? where fights he now ?
Or on the land, or on some floating fence ?

OTHUS.

Of whom speak'st thou, fair Ella?

ELLA.

Nay, nay! thou know'st right well. Did I not
see thee,

High as I stood, e'en now, tossing thine arms,
And motioning thy tale with such fit gesture
As image ships and sails, and daring deeds?
Of whom speak even the beggars in our streets
When they such action use? Thou know'st right
well,
Of Genoa's captain, and of none but he.
Did'st see him from the walls?

OTHUS (*smiling*).

My little kinswoman,
Thou lookest with a keen and martial eye
As thou dost question me: I saw him not;
I come not from the walls.

ELLA.

Didst thou not talk of him as I descended?

OTHUS.

Yes, of that noble fight.—But dost thou see

(*Pointing to his dress.*)

There are more warriors in the world, Ella,
Tho' men do talk of us, it must be granted,
With action more compos'd. Behold me now

The brave Rodrigo's comrade, and the friend
 Of royal Constantine; who is in truth
 The noblest beast o' the herd, and on the foe
 Turns a bold front, whilst with him boldly turn
 A few brave antlers from a timid crowd,
 That quakes and cowers behind.

ELLA.

Yes, Othus, I did mark thy martial garb :
 Heaven's angels blest thee !

OTHUS.

And earth's too, gentle Ella. (*Artillery heard
 again.*)

ELLA (*to Othus, starting fearfully*).

O dost thou smile and such light words affect
 Whilst ruin growls so near us ! hath sad use
 Made misery and sport, and death and merriment,
 Familiar neighbours ?—I'll into my chamber.

Enter PETRONIUS *and a disguised Turk.*

PETRONIUS (*sternly to Ella*).

Yes, to thy chamber go : thou liv'st methinks,
 On the house-top, or watching in the towers.
 I like it not ; and maiden privacy
 Becomes thy state and years. (*To Othus.*) Ha ! art
 thou Othus ?
 Thou'rt well accoutred, sooth ! I knew thee not.

MARTHON.

Yes, he is now a valiant foldier grown :
 His Grecian lute, and pen, and books of grace
 Are thrown aside, and the soft letter'd sage
 Grasps a rude lance.

ELLA.

Nay, mock him not, for it is nobly done.

PETRONIUS (*sternly to Ella*).

Art thou still here? (*Exit Ella abashed and
 chidden.*)

And now, my Lord, — (*Turning to Othus*).

OTHUS (*angrily*).

And now, my Lord, good evening:
 I too, belike, shall trespass on your patience,
 If longer I remain. (*Exit.*)

PETRONIUS.

Well, let him go, it suits our purpose better.
 But who could e'er have thought in warlike garb
 To see him guis'd? He, too, become a fool!

MARTHON.

He thought, as well I guess, to move me also
 His brave devoted brotherhood to join :
 This was his errand here.

PETRONIUS.

I do believe it well : for Constantine,
 With many fair and princely qualities
 That in his clear morn no attention drew,
 Now, on the brow of dark adversity,
 Hangs like a rainbow on a furly cloud,
 And all men look to him. But what avails
 This growing sentiment of admiration
 To our good means? Good Turk, where is thy
 gold?

TURK (*giving him a bag*).

There, Christian, whom I may not well call good.

PETRONIUS.

That as thou wilt : but Mahomet thy master
 Shall find me still his faithful agent here.
 This very night, as I have promis'd to him,
 The people shall in insurrection rise.
 Clam'ring to have the city yielded up ;
 And if your narrow caution stint me not
 In that which rules the storm, it shall be rais'd
 To the full pitch.

TURK.

And what is that, Petronius?

PETRONIUS.

More gold. Ay, by thy turban and thy beard!
 There is a way to make our timid fluggards

The Sultan's work within these walls perform
Better than armed men.

TURK.

And what is that, I pray ?

PETRONIUS.

Why, more gold still.—
I have in pay, besides our mutinous rabble,
Who bawl, and prate, and murmur in our streets,
Prophets, and conjurers, and vision seers,
And wise men not a few, whose secret haunts
The timid flock to : many are the palms
That must be touch'd.—There are within our walls
Of idle, slothful citizens, enow,
If with their active master they should join,
Still to defend them : therefore, be assur'd,
He who shall keep this fickle, wav'ring herd
From such wise union, shall to Mah'met give
This Mistress of the East.

TURK.

Fear not ; thou shalt be satisfied.

PETRONIUS.

Right : let us now to work : 'tis near the time
When, from the walls returning with his friends,
The Emperor his ev'ning hour enjoys,
And puts off warlike cares : now let us forth,
And urge those varlets on. (*To Marthon.*)
Do thou into the eastern quarter go,

And stir them up. Where is our trusty Gorbus?
 The western is his province. Send him hither:
 We must some counsel hold: meantime within
 I wait his coming. Be thou speedy, Marthon.

(Exit Marthon.

Remember, friend.

(To the Turk.)

TURK.

Thou shalt be satisfied.

PETRONIUS.

Good fortune smile upon us!

(Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A State Apartment in the Imperial Palace, with splendid sideboards set forth, on which are seen cups and goblets, &c. as if prepared for a grand repast, and several domestics crossing the stage, carrying different things in their hands.*

Enter HEUGHO, followed by a Stranger and two inferior domestic Officers.

HEUGHO (*after looking over every thing*).

Is naught omitted here? the rubied platters
 And the imperial cup—I see them not.

FIRST OFFICER.

What boots it now, encompals'd thus with foes
 And death and ruin grinning at our side,
 To set forth all this sumptuous garniture,

Which soon shall in a Turkish haram shine?
The Emp'ror heeds it not.

HEUGHO (*Stamping with his foot*).

Dog, but I heed it!

And were the floating remnant of a wreck,
With the sea bellowing round it, all that now
Remain'd of the eastern empire, I thereon,
Until the last wave wash'd us from its side,
Would humbly offer to brave Constantine
The homage due to mine imperial lord.
Out on thee, paltry hind! go fetch them hither.

(*Exit Officer.*)

STRANGER.

This is the hour, you say, when Constantine,
Like a tir'd woodman from his daily toil,
Unclasps his girded breast; and with his friends
Enjoys his social meal right cheerfully
For one so overshadow'd with dark fate.
I am a stranger here, and, by your leave,
I fain would tarry still to have one view
Of his most noble countenance.

HEUGHO.

Thou'rt welcome.

And, gentle stranger, thou wilt see a prince,
Who ably might have reign'd, had not his heart
To the soft shades of friendly intercourse
Still turn'd, as to its true and native place.
A prince with loving friends, but lacking troops:

Rich in the dear good-will of gen'rous minds,
 But poor in kingly allies. One thou'lt see,
 Whose manly faculties, beset with gifts
 Of gentler grace, and soft domestic habits,
 And kindliest feelings, have within him grown
 Like a young forest-tree, beset and 'tangled,
 And almost hid with sweet incumb'ring shrubs;
 That, till the rude blast rends this clust'ring robe,
 Its goodly hardy stem to the fair light
 Discovers not. Hark! now they come:

(Flourish of trumpets.)

Stand thou secure, and see whate'er thou wilt.

(Calling to some people off the stage.)

Ho! you without! move there with more dispatch.

(Several domestics again cross the stage as before.)

STRANGER.

See, yonder come the brave imperial friends,
 If right I guess. They bear a noble mien.

And who is he who foremost walks with steps
 Of gravely-measur'd length, and heavy eyes

Fix'd on the ground? *(Pointing off the stage.)*

HEUGHO.

That is Justiniani; a brave foldier,
 Who doth o' tiptoe walk, with jealous care,
 Upon the very point and highest ridge
 Of honour's path, demure and circumspect,
 Like nicest maid, proud of her spotless fame;
 A steady, cheerless friend.

STRANGER.

And who is he with open, lib'ral front,
Who follows next?

HEUGHO.

He is the brave Rodrigo;
That Genoese, who, with four gallant ships,
Did in the front of the whole Turkish fleet
So lately force his passage to our port,
Bearing us gen'rous and most needful succour.
Does he not look like one, who in the fight
Would fiercely strive, yet to the humbled foe
Give quarter pleasantly?

STRANGER.

And who comes after with more polish'd aspect,
But yet, methinks, keen and intelligent?

HEUGHO.

Oh, that is Othus; a soft letter'd sage,
Who wears his soldier's garb with its first gloss.

STRANGER.

Constantine comes not yet?

HEUGHO.

No; first of all to his imperial dame,
Who o'er his mind a greater influence has
Than may, perhaps, with graver wisdom suit,

Being a dame of keen and lofty passions
 Tho' with fair virtues grac'd, he ever pays
 His dear devotions : he will join them shortly.
 But softly, here they are.

*Enter JUSTINIANI, RODRIGO, OTHUS, and many
 others of the Emperor's friends, armed as if re-
 turned from the walls.*

RODRIGO (*to Justiniani*).

Thou'rt sternly grave : has aught in this day's
 fight
 Befall'n, thy eager temper to disturb?

JUSTINIANI.

Your first directed fire should, in good right,
 Have been against that Turkish standard sent,
 Rear'd in their front.

RODRIGO.

And shall we seriously expend our strength
 In paying worship to each Turkish rag
 That waves before our walls?
 But frown not on me, friend : perhaps I'm wrong.
 We who are bred upon a bark's rough side,
 And midst the rude contention of the waves,
 Must force our steady purpose, as we may,
 Right in the teeth of all opposing things,
 Wrestling with breakers on the scourged rock
 Or tilting it with a seal's cub, good faith!
 As it may chance, naught do we know of forms.

OTHUS.

Another time, valiant Justiniani,
 With more respect to warlike ceremony
 We will conduct ourselves.
 Rodrigo well hath pled his own excuse ;
 And I, thou knowest, am but new in arms.

JUSTINIANI.

Methinks, ev'n to a child it had been plain
 That, when so circumstanced —

OTHUS.

Hush, hush, I pray thee, now ! the emp'ror comes :
 This is his hour of cheerful relaxation,
 Snatch'd from each circling day of busy cares,
 A faint gleam thrown across a dismal gloom,
 Let us not dark it with our petty brawls.

Enter CONSTANTINE.CONSTANTINE (*saluting them*).

A pleasant meeting to us all, brave friends,
 After our day of toil ! There be amongst us
 Tir'd limbs that well have earn'd their hour of rest ;
 This kindly-social hour, this fleeting bliss
 Of the tir'd labourer. Undo our bracings,
 And let us sup as lightly as we may. (*Taking off*
his helmet, which he gives to an attendant.)
 This galls me strangely :
 Mine armourer, methinks, has better skill

To mar men's heads than save them.

Nay all of you, I pray. (*They all begin to take off their helmets, and part of their armour.*)

And gentle Othus too, unbrace thyself:

How likest thou the gripe of soldiers' geer?

OTHUS.

Worn in the cause for which I wear it now,
It feels like the close hug of a rough friend,
Awkward but kindly.

CONSTANTINE.

Thanks, gen'rous Othus! it had pleas'd me better
To've had the gentle service of thy pen.

Thou could'st have told, if so it might have been,
How brave men acted, and how brave men fell.—

Well, let it be, (*Turning aside to check his emotion, and then assuming a cheerful face.*)

You gallant seamen, in th' applauding view
Of the throng'd beach, amidst the tempest's rage,
Ev'n on the last plank of your fever'd bark,
Ride it careeringly, my brave Rodrigo!

RODRIGO.

Yes, royal sir; with brave true-hearted mates
All things we do and bear right cheerfully.

CONSTANTINE.

And so will we.—Your hand, my gallant friend!
And yours, and yours, and yours, my brave
Eubedes—

And noble Carlos too—and all of you—

(Taking all their hands, one after another.)

I am indeed so mated.

Bring me a cooling cup, I pray, good Heugho,

My tongue is parch'd. *(Heugho presents a cup to him kneeling.)*

What, wilt thou still upon thine aged limbs

These cumb'rous forms impose? These furly times

Suit not such ceremony, worthy Heugho.

HEUGHO.

Be health and sweet refreshment in the draught,
My royal master!

CONSTANTINE *(tasting it)*.

And so there is : few cups presented thus
Come with such kindness. But I have, in truth,

Shrunk, as a potentate, to such small grasp,

That now I fairly may put in my claim

To the affections of a man.—Brave friends.

Health to ye all ! *(Drinks, then turning with a smile to Justiniani.)*

Justiniani, I with thee alone

Have cause of quarrel in this day's long toil.

JUSTINIANI.

How so, an' please your highness?

The holy hermit, counting o'er his beads,

Is not more scrupulous than I have been

Naught of his sacred duty to omit,

CONSTANTINE.

Thou put'st a gross affront upon the worth
 Of all thy warlike deeds ; for thou from them
 Claim'st not the privilege to save thyself
 From needless dangers. On the walls this day
 Thou hast expos'd thyself like a raw stripling,
 Who is ashamed to turn one step aside
 When the first darts are whizzing past his ear.
 Rodrigo there, beneath an ass's pannier
 Would save his head from the o'er-passing blow,
 Then, like a lion issuing from his den,
 Burst from his shelter with redoubled ardour.
 Pray thee put greater honour on thyself,
 And I will thank thee for it.

JUSTINIANI.

I stand reproved.

CONSTANTINE.

I'm glad thou dost.—Now to our social rites!
 No tir'd banditti in their nightly cave,
 Whose goblets sparkle to the ruddy gleam
 Of blazing faggots, eat their jolly meal
 With toils, and dangers, and uncertainty
 Of what to-morrow brings, more keenly season'd
 Than we do ours.—Spare not, I pray thee, Heugho,
 Thy gen'rous Tuscan cup : I have good friends
 Who prize its flavour much. *(As he turns to go*
with his friends to the bottom of the stage,
where a curtain between the pillars being

*drawn up, discovers their repast set out, a
Citizen enters in haste.)*

CITIZEN.

I crave to speak unto the emperor.

CONSTANTINE.

What is thine errand?

CITIZEN.

My royal sir, the city's in commotion :
From ev'ry street and alley, ragged varlets
In crowds pour forth, and threaten mighty things.
But one, whom I out-ran, comes on my steps
To bring a fuller tale.

CONSTANTINE (*to Citizen*).

Thou'rt sure of this?

CITIZEN.

It is most certain.

CONSTANTINE (*to Othus*).

What think'st thou, good Othus?

OTHUS.

I doubt it not : 'tis a degraded herd
That fills your walls. This proud imperial city
Has been in ages past the great high-way
Of nations driving their blind millions on
To death and carnage. Thro' her gates have past

Pale cowed monarchs and red-sworded saints,
 Voluptuaries foul, and hard-eyed followers
 Of fordid gain—yea all detested things.
 She hath a common lake or sludge-pool been,
 In which each passing tide has left behind
 Some noisome sediment. She is choak'd up
 With mud and garbage to the very brim.
 Her citizens within her would full quietly
 A pagan's slaves become, would he but promise
 them.

The sure continuance of their slothful ease.
 Some few restraints upon their wonted habits
 And Mah'met's gold, no doubt, have rous'd the
 fools
 To this unwonted stir.

CONSTANTINE.

It may be so : I shall wait further tidings.
 Meantime, my friends, go ye, and as ye can,
 Snatch a short soldier's meal. (*They hesitate.*)
 Nay, go I pray you !
 I must not to my friends say " I command."

(*They all go immediately, and without any order,
 standing round the table, begin to eat.*)

(*To the Citizen, remaining still on the front of
 the stage.*)

And so thou say'st —— But lo ! another messenger.

Enter another CITIZEN in great haste.

SECOND CITIZEN.

The citizens in crowds—the men and women—

The very children too—mine eyes have seen it—
In crowds they come ——

CONSTANTINE.

Take breath, and tell thy tale
Distinctly. From what quarter comest thou?

SECOND CITIZEN.

I'm from the east.

Enter THIRD CITIZEN.

THIRD CITIZEN.

I come to tell your highness that the city
Is in commotion; ev'n with flesh-forks arm'd,
And all the implements of glutt'nous sloth,
The people pour along in bawling crowds,
Calling out, "bread," and "Mah'met," and "sur-
render,"
Towards the royal palace.

CONSTANTINE.

And whence art thou?

THIRD CITIZEN.

I'm from the western quarter.

CONSTANTINE.

Ha! spreads it then so wide? (*Calling to his
friends at the bottom of the stage.*)

VALERIA.

From the high tower my ladies have descry'd
The dark spires redd'ning in their torches' light,
Whilst, like the hoarse waves of a distant sea,
Their mingled voices swell as they approach.

CONSTANTINE.

It is a storm that soon will be o'erblown:
I will oppose to them a fixed rock,
Which they may beat against but cannot shake.

VALERIA.

That is thyself.—O, no! thou shalt not go!
Yea, I am bold! misfortune mocks at state,
And strong affection scorns all reverence;
Therefore, before these lords, ev'n upon thee,
Thou eastern Cæsar, do I boldly lay
My woman's hand, and say, "thou shalt not go."

CONSTANTINE.

Thy woman's hand is stronger, sweet Valeria,
Than warrior's iron grasp,
But yet it may not hold me. Strong affection
Makes thee most fearful where no danger is,
Shall eastern Cæsar, like a timid hind
Scar'd from his watch, conceal his cowering head?
And does an empire's dame require it of him?

VALERIA.

Away, away, with all those pompous sounds!
 I know them not. I by thy side have shar'd
 The public gaze, and the applauding shouts
 Of bending crowds: but I have also shar'd
 The hour of thy heart's sorrow, still and silent,
 The hour of thy heart's joy. I have supported
 Thine aching head, like the poor wand'rer's wife,
 Who, on his seat of turf, beneath heaven's roof,
 Rests on his way.—The storm beats fiercely on us:
 Our nature suits not with these worldly times,
 To it most adverse. Fortune loves us not;
 She hath for us no good: do we retain
 Her fetters only? No, thou shalt not go!

(Twining her arms round him.)

By that which binds the peasant and the prince,
 The warrior and the slave, all that do bear
 The form and nature of a man, I stay thee!
 Thou shalt not go.

CONSTANTINE.

Would'st thou degrade me thus?

VALERIA.

Would'st thou unto my bosom give death's pang?
 Thou lov'st me not.

CONSTANTINE *(with emotion, stretching out his hands to his friends, who stand at some distance).*
 My friends, ye see how I am fetter'd here.

Ye who thus bravely to my fortunes cling
With generous love, less to redeem their fall
Than on my waning fate by noble deeds
To shed a parting ray of dignity :
Ye gen'rous and devoted ; still with you
I thought to share all dangers : go ye now,
And to the current of this swelling tide
Set your brave breasts alone. (*Waving them off*
with his hand, and then turning to her.)
Now, wife, where would'st thou lead me ?

VALERIA (*pointing with great energy to the friends who are turning as if to go out*).

There, there! O, there! thou hast no other way.
(*Brushing away her tears hastily, and then assuming an air of dignity, she takes Constantine by the hand, and leading him across the stage, presents him to his friends.*)

Most valiant, honour'd men, receive your chief,
Worthy the graceful honours of your love,
And heaven's protecting angel go with you !

(*Exeunt Constantine and his friends, paying obeisance to her as they retire, which she returns with the profoundest respect, continuing to look after them till they are out of sight; then returning to the front of the stage with a deep sigh, remains for some time with her eyes fixed on the ground.*)

LUCIA.

My dear and royal mistress, be not thus!
The people will their sov'reign lord respect.

VALERIA.

Will they? Where is my little Georgian maid,
Whose grandfire, tho' a brave and sov'reign prince,
Was piece-meal torn by a ferocious crowd?

LUCIA.

She told a wonderful furcharged tale,
Perhaps to move your pity: heed it not.

VALERIA.

Ah! whereunto do all these turmoils tend—
The wild contention of these fearful times?
Each day comes bearing on its weight of ills,
With a to-morrow shadow'd at its back
More fearful than itself.—A dark progression—
And the dark end of all, what will it be?

LUCIA.

Let not such gloomy thoughts your mind o'er-
cast;
Our noble emperor has on his side
The dark and potent powers.

VALERIA.

What is thy meaning?

LUCIA.

A rarely-gifted man, come from afar,
Who sees strange visions rise before his sight
Of things to come, hath solemnly pronounc'd it,

That Paleologus has on his side
The dark and potent powers.

VALERIA.

Alas ! alas ! are they the friends of virtue ?
Who told thee this ?

LUCIA.

One unto whom he told such marv'llous things
As did all nat'ral knowledge far exceed.

VALERIA.

Thou dost impress me with a strange desire,
As tho' it were upon my mind impress'd
By secret supernatural power. Methinks,
Were this dread night with all its dangers past,
I too would fain —— Ha ! hark ! what noise is
that ? *(Listening with great alarm.)*
Hark, hark ! it is the sound of many sounds,
Mingled and terrible, tho' heard afar.

LUCIA.

Shall I ascend the tower, and give you notice.
Whate'er I see ?

VALERIA *(eagerly)*.

I'll go myself. *(Exit in great alarm, followed by
Lucia and ladies.)*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *An open Street before the imperial palace. A crowd of men, women, and children discovered, bearing in their hands torches, with clubs, sticks, &c. and the stage entirely lighted by the red glare of their torches cast up against the walls of the building. The confused noise and clamour of a great crowd is heard as the curtain draws up.*

FIRST CROWD.

HOLLA! let them come forth who trouble us,
And love they blood and beating they shall have it.

SECOND CROWD.

Surrender! bread and wine, and peaceful days!
Surrender, devils, or ye shall pay the cost.

(All the Crowd call out clamorously, and brandish their torches, &c. in a threatening manner against the palace.)

THIRD CROWD.

Must we, men well instructed, rear'd, and cherish'd,
The chiefest of all townsmen of the earth;
We, whom all nations know and look upon

With envious worship — must we from our meals
 And quiet couches, like your rude barbarians,
 Be scar'd and rous'd with the continued bellowing
 Of curst artillery ? it is a shame.

FIRST CROWD.

It is a crying, an insulting shame.
 Ev'n Mahomet regards our polish'd race
 And rare acquirements ; but for Constantine —

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, ay ! let him come forth with his base crew
 Of savage strangers ; and should they refuse us,
 Ev'n with good teeth and nails, fail other means,
 We will do vultures' work upon them all.
*(All of them calling out together, and brandishing
 their torches, &c. as before.)*

Holla ! holla ! we say to you again ;
 Emperor ! Constantine ! come forth to us !

*(A grand door of the palace opens, from which
 two flights of stairs descend into the street, and
 Constantine with his friends appear coming
 out upon the landing place. The Crowd raise
 a great noise upon seeing him, and he stretches
 out his hand as if he wished to speak, but they
 still continue loud and clamorous.)*

CONSTANTINE.

Audience, if that your sov'reign may command it.

FOURTH CROWD.

Yes, let us hear what he will say to us.

(*Several together.*) There is no harm in that: peace
all of you!

CONSTANTINE.

Behold me at your wish, assembled citizens :
Was it the voice of children or of foes
That call'd me forth?

THIRD CROWD.

Go to with mocking words! are we thy children?

CONSTANTINE.

Ye say, indeed, too truly! children do
Support, and honour, and obey their fire :
They put their aiding hand to every burden
That presses on him : ever gather round him
When dark misfortune lowers; and, strong in them,
He lifts his honour'd head amidst the storm,
Blessing and blest'd.
But I have stood in the dark pafs alone,
Facing its fiercest onset. In your homes,
Ye've stretch'd your easy limbs and fann'd your
brows,
Whilst I in parching toil have spent the day,
Aided by strangers. Ye too truly say
"Are we thy children?"——When my sky was
clear,

Ye follow'd me with fond applauding love,
 And bade God bless your fire; but when it
 lower'd,
 Back to your homes ye shrunk, and gen'rous
 strangers
 Are by my side where children should have stood.

(*A confused murmur rises amongst them, and some call out.*) He speaks good reason, neighbours.

(*Others call out.*) Out on it! all fair words!

(*Others.*) Peace, firs! we'll hear him out.

(*Others.*) No! no! no! no! (*Brandishing their torches violently.*)

OTHORIC (*breaking through them with a great club in his hands.*)

Peace, friends, I say! I am a strong Hungarian,
 And i will hear him out. (*The clamour subsides.*)

CONSTANTINE.

Yes, when the tempest lower'd ye shrunk away.
 But if some gen'rous shame has mov'd you now—
 If, thus assembled, with repentant zeal
 Ye would return, behold these open'd arms!
 O there be still amongst ye men sufficient
 To save your city, your domestic roofs,
 Your wives, your children, all that good men love!
 Were each one willing for a little term
 To face but half the dangers which perforce
 Not doing this, he stands expos'd to;
 To bear but half the toils which I bear daily,
 And shall bear lovingly.

FIRST CROWD.

Go to! surrender and have done with it.
Who thanks—who calls upon thee for thy toils?

CONSTANTINE.

That voice which, in the hour of trial, bids
The good man give his soft and sensitive frame
To death and torture, and ev'n fearful woman
Bend her fair neck unto th' uplifted stroke,
Calls upon me—yea, and I will obey it!

OTHORIC.

By the good faints he speaks like a brave man.

FIRST CROWD.

Acts he like one? will he come down to us?
(*Several speaking together.*) He does; he comes
in truth!

(*Constantine, after speaking in dumb show to his
friends, descends the stairs.*)

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, in good faith, he comes unarmed too!

CONSTANTINE.

No, citizens, unarm'd I am not come;
For ev'ry good man here some weapon wears
For my defence.

FOURTH CROWD.

Yes, he says well; and we'll defend him too.

(*Several others.*) And so we will; huzza! huzza!
huzza!

Long live brave Constantine, our noble Emperor!

(*Many speaking at once.*) No, no! peace and surrender is our call! (*Raising loud cries, and brandishing their torches with violent threatening gestures.*)

FOURTH CROWD.

Hear him out, fools, and he'll perhaps consent
To hon'able surrender.

CONSTANTINE (*to Fourth Crowd, and those who range themselves on his side*).

No, friends; if in this hope with me ye stand,
Turn to your place again; for whilst I breathe,
With men enough in these encompass'd walls
To fire one gun, never shall Turkish banner
Upon our turrets wave. In this firm mind,
Upon those walls I am content to die,
By foe-men slain, or, if heav'n wills it so,
Here on this spot, by those I will not name.

OTHORIC.

No! we will die first, be it as it may,
Ere one hair of thy noble head shall fall!

CROWD (*on Constantine's side*).

Long live brave Constantine ! brave Paleologus !
Huzza ! huzza !

CROWD (*on the opposite side*).

No ; bread, and peace, and Mahomet, say we !
(*Both parties call out tumultuously, and threaten one another, and Rodrigo, Justiniani, and Othus rush down amongst them, leaving their other friends to guard the door of the palace.*)

SECOND CROWD.

Ay, thou sea-lion ! thou too needs must come
To growl upon us. (*To Rodrigo.*)

RODRIGO.

No, faith ! I know you well : ye are at large
A set of soft, luxurious, timid slaves,
On whom a cat with muffled paws might mew,
And ye would turn from it.—But still amongst you,
I would upon it pledge my main and claws,
There are some honest souls who have ere now
Quaff'd their full bumpers to a brave man's health,
And I, in sooth, am come, with their good leave,
To shake hands with them all. (*Holding out his
hand invitingly to the opposite crowd.*)
Come ; who loves valiant worth and Paleologus,
Give me his hand.

(Many of the crowd giving him their hands.) There is one for thee.

(Second.) Ay, and there. *(Third.)* And there.

RODRIGO *(to one who hesitates)*.

And thou too, for thou wear'st upon thy brow
A soldier's look : I must perforce have thee.

(Casting up his hat in the air, and joined by all the crowd on his side.)

Long live brave Constantine ! huzza !

(This they continue to do till the opposite party are dispirited and beat off the stage. Rodrigo then presents his newly-acquired friends to Constantine.)

CONSTANTINE.

I thank you all, my brave and zealous friends.
Within the palace walls I'll now conduct you,
And martial there my new-gain'd strength, for
which
I give heaven thanks.

(Exeunt Constantine, followed by his friends, &c. Rodrigo walking last, and just about to go off the stage, when Othoric re-enters by the opposite side, and calls after him.)

OTHORIC.

Hark ye ! a word with ye, my noble captain.

RODRIGO *(returning)*.

What would'st thou say ?

OTHORIC.

Look on my face ; my name is Othoric ;
I'm strong, thou see'st, and have a daring soul :
Look on my face ; my name is Othoric :
Think'st thou thou shalt remember me, tho' thou
Should'st ne'er again behold me ?

RODRIGO.

I shall, my friend : thou hast a daring countenance.

OTHORIC.

My deeds shall not belie it. With this crowd
I came, a stranger of most desp'rate fortune,
And hir'd by treach'rous men fell work to do.
But now, unhir'd, I'll do for your brave master
A deed that shall make Turkish ears to tingle,
And Christian too, or fail it or succeed.

RODRIGO.

What wilt thou do ?

OTHORIC.

The consciousness of what one arm performs
Let one heart keep.

RODRIGO.

Heaven aid and prosper then thy secret thought,
If it be good and honest ! Fare thee well !

(Exeunt severally.)

SCENE II. *A small narrow Street, before a private sombre-looking house.*

Enter OTHUS and RODRIGO.

OTHUS.

Move slowly here, for now we pass the fane
In which the mystic vision-seeing sage
To ears of faith speaks his wild oracles.

RODRIGO.

What, he of whom we've heard such marv'llous
things ?

OTHUS.

Yes ; such perturbed times his harvest prove,
When anxious minds, in dread of coming ill,
Would draw aside, impatiently, the veil
Of dark futurity.—Softly, I pray :
A female form now issues from the door :
It moves, methinks, like Ella.

Enter ELLA from the house with a female Attendant.

RODRIGO (*eagerly*).

It is herself, and I will speak to her.
Fair maid, as well I guess by that light trip,
Thy lover's fate hangs on a lucky thread ;
Tough, and well whiten'd in a kindly sun.

ELLA.

Well hast thou guess'd : fortune is passing kind ;
She leads thee, fights for thee, and guards thy head
From ev'ry foe-man's stroke.

RODRIGO.

Ay, but thy lover, Ella ; was it not
Of him we spoke ?

ELLA.

Fye, do not mock me thus !

OTHUS.

In truth he mocks thee, Ella, and no faith
To fates foretold or mystic fages gives.

RODRIGO.

Believe him not, sweet maid. We seamen, truly,
Small dealings have with learn'd forcery ;
Nor bead, nor book, nor ring, nor mutter'd rhymes,
Are for our turn : but on the sea-rock's point,
In shape of hern, or gull, or carrion bird,
Our unfeed wizards sit, and, with stretch'd throats,
Speak strange mysterious things to wave-toss'd men,
With many perils compass'd. Nay, ofttimes
The mermaid, seated on her coral stool,
Spreading her yellow hair to the funn'd breeze,
Will sing a song of future fortunes fair
To him who has the luck to meet with her :
And ev'n the nightly winds will thro' our shrouds

Distinctive voices utter unto those,
 Who in their storm-rock'd cradles lie and think
 Of their far-distant homes.—I do believe
 That all good fortune shall betide thy love,
 Being thy love; for that doth far outdo
 All other fortune; and besides, no doubt,
 A fair and courtly youth.

ELLA.

Go to! go to! thou mockest me again!
 I love a brave man ——

RODRIGO.

And not passing fair,
 Nor very courtly?

OTHUS.

No, nor wearing now
 His youth's best bloom; but somewhat weather-
 beaten,
 And sunn'd on sultry shores?

ELLA.

Fie on you both, you hold me in derision!
 I'm young, and all unlearn'd, and well I know
 Not passing sage; but do I merit this?
 (Turns to go away from them in tears.)

RODRIGO.

By heavens thou shalt not go! *(Catching hold of
 her hand to prevent her.)*

Y

I have the fix'd decree of fate foretold,
Which to the sultan gives this mighty city,
Making all opposition and defence
Vain ; and their superstition works for us
Most powerfully.

PETRONIUS.

So far 'tis well ; but be thou on thy guard ;
I am expressly come to caution thee.
Should any visit thee, whom thou suspectest
To be connected with th' imperial friends,
Be sure thy visions speak to them of things
Pleasant to loyal ears.

CONJUROR.

Fear not ; I have already been forewarn'd,
And have such caution follow'd.

PETRONIUS.

Thou hast done wisely : still keep on thy guard,
And be not ev'n surpris'd if thou, ere long,
Should'st have a royal visitor. My agents,
Who in th' imperial palace are on watch,
Have giv'n me notice that Valeria's mind
Is this way bent. If so, let thy delusions
Still tempt her in the city to remain,
For herein is the sultan much concern'd.
Hush ! we are interrupted.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT (*to Conjuror*).

A noble matron craves to speak with thee.

CONJUROR.

Dost thou not know her?

SERVANT.

No ; in a black stole
She's closely veil'd ; yet noble is her gait ;
And her attendant underneath his cloak,
But ill conceal'd, wears an imperial crest.

PETRONIUS *and* CONJUROR (*both together*).

Can it indeed be she? (*Pausing to consider.*)

CONJUROR.

I'll venture it. (*to Servant.*) Go and conduct her
hither. (*Exit Servant.*)
It must be she : I'll boldly venture it.

PETRONIUS.

Thou may'st with little risk : meantime, remember
The caution I have given thee.

CONJUROR.

Trust to my skill, and be a while withdrawn,
My noble patron. (*Exit Petronius.*)

*Enter VALERIA, concealed under a long black stole,
followed by Lucia and two female Attendants, who
remain at the bottom of the stage whilst she comes
forward.*

CONJUROR.

Approach, great dame.

VALERIA.

Yes, in misfortunes so;
That is my eminence : and unto thee
I come, an anxious suitor, if that truly
Th' unseen mysterious powers with whom thou
 deal'st,
To human weal and woe alliance bear,
And may unto the care-rack'd mind foreshew
The path of awful fate that lies before it.
I do beseech thee ! —

CONJUROR.

Say thou dost command ;
For thro' that fable stole, were it as thick
As midnight's curtain, still I could behold
Thy keenly-glancing eye, and the dark arch
Of royal brows accustom'd to command.

VALERIA.

Ha ! dost thou see me ?

CONJUROR.

Yea ; and who is he,
Whose shadowy unreal form behind thee towers,
As link'd with thine tho' absent ? O'er his head
Th' imperial eagle soars, and in his hand
He grasps the emblem of supreme command.

VALERIA (*throwing back the stole with astonishment mixed with fear*).

O, most mysterious and wonderful !
 Nothing is hid from thee ; thou see'st afar
 The distant death's day of the swathed babe,
 Falling in hoary age, and the life's morn
 Of those who are not.—Here then all confess'd,
 A wretched empress and a trembling wife,
 I stand before thee. O let thy keen eye
 Thro' the dark mist that limits nature's sight,
 Follow that phantom o'er whose head doth soar
 Th' imperial bird ! for, be it good or ill,
 His fate is mine, and in his fate alone
 I seek to know it.

CONJUROR.

And hast thou strength to bear it ? art thou firm ?
 For that which smites mine eye must smite thine
 ear.

VALERIA (*alarmed*).

Thou reck'nest then to look on dreadful things ?

CONJUROR.

I may or may not ; but with mind not brac'd
 In its full strength, seek not thy fate to know.

VALERIA (*after a hesitating pause of great agitation*).

I can bear all things but the dread uncertainty
 Of what I am to bear.

CONJUROR.

Then shall it be unto thee as thou wilt.

(After some mysterious motions and muttering to himself, he turns his face towards the bottom of the stage, as if he had his eye steadfastly fixed upon some distant point; and continues so for some time without moving, whilst she stands watching his countenance eagerly, with her face turned to the front of the stage.)

VALERIA *(impatiently, after a pause)*.

O! what dost thou behold?

CONJUROR.

Nay, nothing yet but the dark formless void.
 Be patient and attend.—I see him now :
 On the tower'd wall he stands : the dreadful battle
 Roars round him. Thro' dark smoke, and sheeted
 flames,
 And showers of hurtling darts, and hissing balls,
 He strides : beneath his sword falls many a foe :
 His dauntless breast to the full tide of battle
 He nobly gives.—Still on thro' the dark storm
 Mine eye pursues him to his fate's high cope—

VALERIA.

His fate's high cope ! merciful, awful heaven !

(After a pause.)

O, wherefore dost thou pause ? thine eyes roll
 terribly :

What dost thou see? thou look'st on things most
dreadful!

O look not thus, but say what thou dost see!

CONJUROR.

I see a frowning chief, the crescent's champion,
In bold defiance meet thy valiant lord.

The fight is fierce and bloody. —

VALERIA.

Again thou pausest yet more terribly.—

Hast thou no utterance for what thou seest?

O God! O God! thou look'st upon his death!

(Clasping her hands violently.)

Dost thou not speak? wilt thou not answer me?

'Thou look'st upon his death!

CONJUROR.

I look on nothing, for thy frantic terrors
Have broke the fabric of my air-shap'd vision,
And all is blank.

VALERIA.

And will it not return to thee again?
O fix thine eyes, and to it bend thy soul
Intently, if it still may rise before thee,
For thou hast made me frantic!

CONJUROR *(after a pause, and fixing his eyes as
before.)*

The forms again return—

The champions meet : the fight is fierce and terrible :

The fateful stroke is given ; and Constantine ——

VALERIA.

Merciful heaven !

CONJUROR.

And Constantine lays the proud crescent low.

VALERIA (*pausing for a moment as if to be assured that she has heard right, and then holding up her hands in extasy.*)

It is ! it is ! O words of bliss !—Thou see'st it !
My Constantine lays the proud crescent low !
Thou look'st upon it truly ; and their forms
Before thee move, ev'n as the very forms
Of living men ?

CONJUROR.

Even so.

VALERIA.

O blessed fight !
It is not witch'ry's spell, but holy spirits
Sent from a gracious heav'n that shapés such forms ;
And be it lawless or unhallow'd deem'd,
Here will I kneel in humble gratitude.

CONJUROR (*preventing her from kneeling*).

No, no, this must not be : attend again :
There's more behind.

VALERIA.

Ha! say'st thou more behind?—Or good or evil?

CONJUROR.

Mixed I ween: 'tis still in darkness lapp'd.

VALERIA.

In darkness let it rest: I've heard enough.
 I would not look upon thine eyes again,
 And in my fancy shape thy unseen fights,
 For all that e'er ——— Is that which lies behind
 A far extended vision? (*Pausing anxiously.*)
 Thou wilt not answer me—well, rest it so.
 But yet, O forward look for one short year,
 And say who then shall be this city's lord.

CONJUROR.

Thy husband and thy lord, most mighty dame,
 Shall at that period be this city's lord.

VALERIA.

Then I am satisfied. Thou hast my thanks,
 My very grateful thanks. There is thy recompense,
 And this too added. (*Giving him a purse, and then
 a ring from her band.*)

We shall meet again

In happier days, when the proud crescent's low,
 And thou shalt have a princely recompense.

(*Turning to her Attendants as she goes away.*)
 Come, Lucia; come, my friends; the storm will
 pass,

And we shall smile in the fair light of heaven
In happier days. (*Exit, followed by her Attendants,*

CONJUROR (*looking at his reward*).

Good sooth, this almost smites against my heart;
But goes she not far happier than she came?
Have I not earn'd it well?

Re-enter PETRONIUS.

PETRONIUS.

Thou hast well earn'd it.
What! harbour such poor scruples in a breast
So exercised in a trade like this?
Eye on't! But if thy conscience is so nice,
Know that thou hast in all good likelihood
Predicted truly; and her lord and husband
Shall be still, as thou say'st, this city's lord.

CONJUROR.

How so?

PETRONIUS.

Hast thou not skill enough to guess?
Much has the sultan of Valeria heard;
And, with the future beauties of his palace,
His fancy, in the most distinguish'd rank,
Already places her. Thou wilt ere long,
I can foretel by certain fleeting shapes
Which at this moment dance before mine eyes,
A favour'd, famous, courtly prophet be.

My little Ella too, taught by my art,
 May play, perhaps her part ; and so together
 We'll amicably work.—May it not be ?
 Put up thy gold and say it is well earn'd.

CONJUROR.

It must be had, and therefore must be earn'd,
 Falsely or honestly.—Does Constantine,
 As speaks this morning's rumour, send again
 Another embassy to Mahomet
 With terms of peace ?

PETRONIUS.

He does, my friend : already in the palace
 He, and his band of self-devoted fools,
 Deliberate on it. Thou, at no great risk,
 May'st prophesy the issue of their counsels.

CONJUROR.

I have adventured upon bolder guessing.

PETRONIUS.

Excepting that slight aid from Genoa,
 Which by the master of a coasting vessel,
 Kept secretly on watch, I am inform'd
 Is now almost within sight of the coast,
 No hope remains to Constantine. And this
 Shall not deceive him long ; for I've dispatch'd,
 In a swift-sailing skiff, a trusty agent,
 Who shall with costly bribes and false reports
 Deter their boldness from all desp'rate efforts

To force a passage to the block'd-up port :
 A thing, Rodrigo's bold success alone
 Hath taught us to believe e'en possible.

CONJUROR.

Thanks for your information, my good lord :
 I'll profit by it.

PETRONIUS.

But use it prudently. And so good day.
 Well thrive thy trade, and all good luck attend us.
(Exeunt severally.)

SCENE IV. *An apartment in the imperial palace, with a view through a grand arched door of another apartment, in which are discovered Constantine, Othus, Justiniani, Rodrigo, and others, arising from a council table. They enter and come forward.*

CONSTANTINE.

Well, my brave friends, I to your care intrust
 This last attempt by honourable treaty
 To gain peace from the foe. Heav'n bless your
 efforts.

JUSTINIANI.

All that strict honour will permit to us
 Shall be most truly done, imperial lord,
 And one step farther on we cannot go.

CONSTANTINE.

Had I wish'd more than this, Justiniani,
I had sent other ministers. ——
Heav'n bless your efforts, brave ambassadors,
And make you wise as brave !

If we succeed not,

As much I fear, it is my earnest wish,
Ere the grand push that shall our fate decide,
To meet you all in blessed charity,
And join with you, perhaps, in the last rites
Of christian worship that within our walls
Shall e'er be celebrated.

OTHUS.

Your wish shall be fulfill'd : we all desire it.

CONSTANTINE.

I thank you. In an hour hence be prepar'd
To set out for the sultan's camp. So, brothers,
Good day, and all good favour.

(Exeunt all but Constantine and Othus.)

CONSTANTINE *(to Othus as he is about to go after
the others)*.

Wilt thou go also, Othus ?

OTHUS.

Not if your highness does command my stay.

CONSTANTINE.

Ah, gentle friend! I do no more command!
 But this distresses thee. Well, gen'rous man,
 Thou art commanded. (*Pointing to a seat, and they
 both sit.*)

Here, by thy friendly side,
 I'll give my heart a little breathing space;
 For oh! the gen'rous love of these brave men,
 Holding thus nobly to my sinking fate,
 Presses it sorely.
 From thee nor from myself can I conceal
 The hopeless state in which I am beset.
 No foreign prince a brother's hand extends
 In this mine hour of need; no christian state
 Sends forth its zealous armies to defend
 This our begirded cross: within our walls,
 Tho' with th' addition of our later friends,
 I cannot number soldiers ev'n sufficient
 To hold a petty town 'gainst such vast odds.
 I needs must smile and wear a brow of hope,
 But with thee, gentle Othus, I put off
 All form and seeming; I am what I am,
 A weak and heart-rent man.—Wilt thou forgive
 me?
 For I in truth must weep.

OTHUS.

Yes, unrestrained weep, thou valiant soul
 With many a wave o'er-ridden! Thou striv'st
 nobly

Where hearts of sterner stuff perhaps had sunk :
 And o'er thy fall, if it be so decreed,
 Good men will mourn, and brave men will shed
 tears,
 Kindred to those which now thou shed'st. Thy
 name
 Shall in succeeding ages be remember'd
 When those of mighty monarchs are forgot.

CONSTANTINE.

Deceive me not ; thy love deceiveth thee.
 Men's actions to futurity appear
 But as th' events to which they are conjoin'd
 Do give them consequence. A fallen state,
 In age and weakness fall'n, no hero hath ;
 For none remain behind unto whose pride
 The cherish'd mem'ry of his acts pertains.
 O no, good Othus, fame I look not for.
 But to sustain in heaven's all-seeing eye,
 Before my fellow men, in mine own fight,
 With graceful virtue and becoming pride,
 The dignity and honour of a man,
 Thus station'd as I am, I will do all
 That man may do, and I will suffer all—
 My heart within me cries, that man can suffer.

*(Starting up with vehemence, and holding up
 both hands firmly clenched.)*

Shall low-born men on scaffolds firmly tread,
 For that their humble townsmen should not blush,
 And shall I shrink ? No, by the living God !
 I will not shrink, albeit I shed these tears.

OTHUS.

To be in toils and perils, nay in sufferings,
 With th' applauding sympathy of men
 Upon his side, is to the noble mind
 A state of happiness beyond the bliss
 Of calm inglorious ease.

CONSTANTINE.

O no, good Othus ! thou misjudgest of me.
 I would, God knows, in a poor woodman's hut
 Have spent my peaceful days, and shar'd my crust
 With her who would have cheer'd me, rather far
 Than on this throne ; but, being what I am,
 I'll be it nobly.

OTHUS.

Yes, thou wilt be it nobly, spirit as brave
 As e'er wore Cæsar's name !

CONSTANTINE (*smiling sorrowfully*).

Yes, there is cause for me ; there is good cause.
 But for those valiant men, link'd in my fate,
 Who have in other lands their peaceful homes
 And dear domestic ties, on whom no claim
 Lays its strong hold—alas ! what cause have they ?
 What is their recompense ? Fame is not mine ;
 And unto them —— O this doth press my heart !
 A heart furcharg'd with many cares, and press'd
 With that besides, which more than all—with that
 Which I have wrestled with—which I have strove—

Z

With that which comes between me and myself—
 The self that as a christian and a man
 I strongly strove to be ———

OTHUS.

You have before some secret cause of trouble
 Hinted in broken words : will not your highness
 Unto a faithful friend ——

CONSTANTINE (*turning away from him*).

No, no, good Othus !
 Sometimes I dream like a distracted man
 And nurse dark fancies. Power and lawless will—
 Defenceless beauty—Mahomet—Valeria—
 Shape out of these wild words whate'er thou wilt,
 For I can say no more.

OTHUS.

Alas, I know it all !

CONSTANTINE.

And yet why should it thus disturb my mind ?
 A thought, perhaps, that in no other breast
 Hath any shelter found.—It is my weakness :
 I am ashamed of it.—I can look
 On my short-fated span and its dark bound :
 I can, God strength'ning me, my earthly task
 Close as becomes a king ; and, being clos'd,
 To that which in this world's tumultuous stage
 Shall happen after it, I am as nothing.

OTHUS.

Alas ! my royal master, do not thus
To racking thoughts give away ! is there not means
To free you from this pain, if you to use them
Have courage ? Let the empress be convey'd
Far from these walls. It is a cruel remedy,
But it will give you peace.

CONSTANTINE.

I did attempt it, but she has so closely
Entwin'd herself upon me—O, my friend,
It needs must pass ! I in th' unconscious grave
Shall be at rest.

OTHUS.

But does she know the nature of your fears ?

CONSTANTINE.

O no ! she does not ! from that hateful subject,
As from a hideous serpent, still with her
I've kept aloof.—Alas ! what can I do ?
I could as well into her noble heart
Thrust the barb'd dart as tell her what I fear.

OTHUS.

Perhaps she still, as from the common horrors
Of a sack'd town, may be conjur'd to flee.
And here she comes : be it at least attempted.

Enter VALERIA, LUCIA, and attendant Ladies.

VALERIA (*to Constantine*).

I come to claim thy promise : one short hour,
A hasty sunbeam thro' the cloud's dark skirt,
Thou giv'st to me, and I must claim my right.
Thy friends too, ere they go, shall be my guests :
I have brought powerful suitors to assist me.

(*Pointing to her ladies.*)

Ha ! what disturbs thee ? how is this, my love ?
Thy face is chang'd and troubl'd—What new
cause ——

CONSTANTINE.

O, no new cause ! one that has much disturb'd
me.

VALERIA.

And one to me unknown ?

CONSTANTINE.

Speak to her, Othus !

OTHUS.

By many various ills and cares oppress'd,
Your royal lord is still most closely touch'd
With that which does your weal regard. What fate
May, in a storm-ta'en city, of dire fights
And horrid cruelties, have in reserve,

If such the city's doom, who can foresee?
 O, let him then his painful station hold,
 Gen'rous Valeria! from one care reliev'd,
 His heaviest care, the thought of leaving thee
 The involv'd witness of such horrid things!

VALERIA.

What would'st thou say in this? Think'st thou
 the ruin

In which he perishes will have for me
 Or form or circumstances? It will be
 Th' upbreking crash of all existing things,
 That undistinguish'd is, and felt but once.
 Othus, thou talk'st like an unskilful sage:
 It was not thus thy master bade thee speak.

CONSTANTINE.

Valeria, hard necessity compels us.
 I have already safe asylum sought
 For the last tender remnant of our race,
 That something might from this dire wreck be
 sav'd,
 And shall I not for thee —

VALERIA.

No; I am nothing
 But what I am for thee! When that is finish'd —

CONSTANTINE.

Ah, my Valeria, but that will not finish!
 Thou still may'st be for me—thou still may'st bear

Honour'd memoral amongst living men
Of him who was thy lord.—Good Lucia, aid me,
And gentle Servia too, and all of you!

(To the Ladies).

Cling round your mistress with your soothing love,
And say that in a foreign land you'll be
The faithful friends and soothers of her woe,
Where ev'ry virtuous heart will bear to her
The kindred ties of holiest sympathy.
Say ye will be with her in kindest zeal:
Ye will not leave her?

LUCIA *and the other Ladies.*

No, we'll never leave her!

(Gathering round her affectionately.)

Most dear and royal Mistress, whilst life holds,
In what'er land, in what'er state you are,
We'll never leave you.

VALERIA.

I know it well: thanks to your gen'rous love!
But yet forbear, nor thus beset me round.

(Putting them gently from her, and fixing her eyes upon Constantine.)

O, Paleologus! hast thou for me
In fancy shap'd a world and an existence
Where thou art not? *(Running to him and falling on his neck.)*

Here is my world, my life, my land of refuge,
And to no other will I ever flee.
Here still is light and hope; turning from this,
All else is round me as a yawning tomb.

CONSTANTINE.

My dearest love ! my gen'rous honour'd love !
 My sweet Valeria ! thou distractest me ;
 But have thy way, for I can urge no more.
 Let dark fate come : I will abide its worst.

VALERIA.

Nay, say not dark ; there is a hope within me ;
 'Tis sure, 'tis strong, it cannot be deceitful.
(A signal heard from without.)
 Hark ! hark ! a signal !
(Voices are heard calling without.) Ships are in
 fight ! supplies and warlike aid !

VALERIA *(holding up her hands)*.

O blessed sound ! there is salvation in it.
 Heaven sends us aid ! *(Voices again call out as before, and the signal is repeated.)*
 Again the blessed sound !
 And here Rodrigo comes, wearing a face
 Of welcome tidings.

Enter RODRIGO.

Succours, brave Rodrigo ?

RODRIGO.

Yes, ships from Genoa are now in sight,
 Bearing, no doubt, brave aid, if to the port
 They can make good their entrance.

(All except Constantine.) Good heaven be blest'd

CONSTANTINE.

And fays Rodrigo “if”? (*Shaking his head.*)

VALERIA.

Nay, fear not, they will enter; with them comes
Another brave Rodrigo; thro’ barr’d adamant,
Did it oppose them, they will force their way.

RODRIGO.

If they but have one jot of manhood in them,
They’ll do all possible things.

VALERIA.

Ay, and all things are possible!

CONSTANTINE.

In truth, thou talk’st with such exulting confidence,
Thou almost temptest me to grasp at hope.
(*Voices call out as before, and a signal from the towers.*)

VALERIA.

The animating sound! Come, come! O, come!
And o’er the blue waves hail the blessed fight.
(*Runs out exultingly, every one following her with animated alacrity.*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The Turkish Camp: the tent of Mahomet, who is discovered sitting alone in the eastern manner, with a great sheet of parchment spread out before him, which he is considering attentively.*

MAHOMET (*after tracing some lines with a pen or pencil*).

Ho, Osmir! art thou here?

Enter OSMIR.

Come hither, vizir; follow with thine eye
The various dispositions of this plan
Which for our grand attack I here have traced.
God and the Prophet being on our side,
That mingled broil of fierce and dreadful fight
Which shall not cease till from the list of nations
This eastern empire, with its long told line
Of paltry Cæsars, be expung'd and blank,
Shall not be long delay'd.

OSMIR.

All things must yield unto the towering spirit
And comprehensive genius of your highness.
Permit your slave. (*Looking over the plan.*)
Conceiv'd, indeed, with deep and wond'rous skill!

But mighty lord, if that a worm may speak,
 Your van, methinks, is of a motly class,
 The vile refuge and garbage of the camp ;
 Are muffelmen led on in glory's path
 By such as these ?

MAHOMET (*smiling fiercely*).

No ; but brave muffulmen o'er such as these
 May step to glory's path. Garbage, I trust,
 Is good enough for filling ditches up.
 Some thousand carcases, living and dead,
 Of those who first shall glut the en'my's rage,
 Push'd in, pell-mell, by those who press behind,
 Will rear for us a bridge to mount the breach
 Where ablest engineers had work'd in vain.

OSMIR.

This did escape my more contracted thoughts.
 And here your highness stations Georgian troops :
 Are they sure men in such important service ?

MAHOMET (*smiling again*).

Ay, sure as death ; here is my surety for them.
 See'st thou what warriors in the rear are plac'd,
 With each a cord and hatchet in his hand ?
 Those grizly hangmen, in their canvas sleeves,
 Fight for me better than an armed band
 Of christian knights full cap-apée.—Look o'er it :
 Something, perchance, may have escap'd my
 thoughts.

OSMIR (*after again examining it*).

No ; every thing is consummately plann'd.—
But, mighty sultan, this old officer,
Whom you have station'd here with your new
troops,
Is not to be relied on.

MAHOMET.

How so, Osmir ?

OSMIR.

It is suspected that he has receiv'd
The en'my's gold ; one thing, at least, is certain,
He has had private meetings with the foe.

MAHOMET.

What ! art thou sure of this ?—Send for him
quickly.

The fool midst blocks and bowstrings has so long
His base head tott'ring worn, he thinks, no doubt,
It needs must be his own. Send from him quickly,
And see that which is needful done upon him.

(*Drawing the pen sternly across the name on
the plan.*)

There ; from the world of living things I blot him ;
Another takes his place. (*Giving a paper to Osmir.*)
These are the usual orders for the night ;
Assemble thou the sev'ral officers,
And give to each his own partic'lar charge.

OSIMER.

Your slave obeys.

*(Exit.)*MAHOMET *(alone, after musing for a little while).*

Have I done well to give this hoary vet'ran,
Who has for thirty years fought in our wars,
To the death-cord unheard? *(Sternly, after pausing
a short space.)*

I have done well.

In my disguised rounds, but two nights since,
Lift'ning at his tent door, I heard him speak
Words that methought approach'd to flight esteem
Of my endowments and capacity.

Yes, he is guilty. *(After walking up and down several times he opens another scroll.)*

But I will fear no treason : here is that
On which I may rely. In mortal man
I have no trust ; they are all hollow slaves,
Who tremble and detest, and would betray.
But on the fates, and the dark secret powers,
So say those sure unerring calculations
Of deep astrology, I may depend. *(Sitting down again, and considering the scroll.)*

Ay, it must needs be so : this constellation
In close conjunction with the warrior's star,
Trac'd back in magic numbers three times three,
And nine times nine, and added three again,
Unto the hour of my nativity,
Makes it infallible. Here have I mark'd it

With mine own science, num'ral, learn'd, and sure.
 Ha! ha! your foolish christians now believe
 Men's future fortunes are by wizards seen,
 In airy forms pourtray'd, like mimick shows,
 And trust thereto with fond simplicity.

*(Othoric, who about the middle of this speech
 has made his appearance from behind the cur-
 tain of the tent, disguised like a Turk, but
 without a turban, now, stealing close up to
 Mahomet, lifts up his dagger to strike.)*

What do I hear?

OTHORIC.

It is thy fate, blind Turk, uncalculated.

(Striking.)

MAHOMET *(parrying the blow with his sheathed sci-
 mitar, which he afterwards draws.)*

Ho! help without! treason and parricide!

Ho! guards without, I say? *(Guards rush in, and
 Othoric is seized, after defending himself des-
 perately.)*

MAHOMET.

(To Othoric.) Who art thou? What dark tyrant
 fet thee on

To do this murderous and horrid deed?

OTHORIC.

And think'st thou such deeds horrid?—But I
 came

To act and not to speak.

MAHOMET.

Say rather, villain, to be acted on.
Do racks and burning iron please thee well
That thou should'st earn them with such desp'rate
pains.

(*To the Guards.*) Stretch out his arms, and let me
look on them. (*Looking at his arms, and
surveying him all over, he shrinks back as
from a danger escaped, and then smiles
grimly.*)

There will be tough work on those finewy limbs
When they are dealt with.—Lead the traitor off.
I will give orders for his fate ere long.

(*To Othoric, who is about to speak.*)

Thou shalt not speak : I hate thy horrible face.
Lead him away ? (*Exit Othoric and Guards, met by
Petronius and Marthon, who enter as they
are going out.*)

PETRONIUS.

What prisoner is this they lead along ?

MAHOMET.

A dark assassin in my tent conceal'd,
Whose daring hand ev'n now aim'd at my life.

PETRONIUS (*casting up his eyes to heaven*).

The life of great and godlike Mahomet !
It makes my blood turn cold.

MARTHON.

I too am stunn'd, and tremble at the thought.

MAHOMET.

Yes, all may tremble who in the dark purpose
Have part or knowledge had.

PETRONIUS *and* MARTHON (*both alarmed*).

What means my lord?

(*Mahomet walks several times across the stage with angry strides, whilst they look fearfully upon one another, and then going sternly up to them.*)

MAHOMET.

I know the base transactions of last night :
Ye stuff'd my gold into the dirty palms
Of those who shook their torches in the air,
And cried long live brave Paleologus.
I know it all : think ye with upcast looks,
And mumm'ry such as this, to blind mine eyes ?

PERONIUS (*falling on his knees*).

As there's a God in heav'n, to you, great
sultan !

We have been true ! (*Marthon kneels also.*)

MAHOMET.

Up, crouching slaves ! when men so bred as you
are
Thus lowly kneel, my very soul adhors them,

PETRONIUS.

Your death, great monarch, were to Paleologus
Triumph and safety, but to us swift ruin.

MARTHON.

And shall suspicions so improbable
Fall upon us, who in your secret service
Have dangers brav'd, and from your hands alone
Look for the recompense?

PETRONIUS.

If we last night have fail'd ———

MAHOMET (*stamping with his foot*).

I will not hear you!

Enter OSMIR.

Osмир, know'st thou this horrible attempt?

OSMIR.

I do great prince, and bless the Prophet's arm
That has preserv'd you. What base enemy
Has arm'd the desp'rate villain?

MAHOMET.

Petronius here and his smooth Grecian friend
Throw accusation on the emperor.

OSMIR.

This moment in your camp there is arriv'd

An embassage of his most honour'd friends,
Sent by the emperor to treat of peace.

MAHOMET.

At this unlikely hour ?

OSMIR.

Yes, time now presses, and, as I should guess,
The hopes of succour from those friendly vessels
That vainly have attempted through your fleets
To force a passage, raising short-liv'd joy
Full soon extinguish'd, has to this late hour
Delay'd their coming.

Hope gone, they now are humbled suitors. Here,
Within your power, you have the chieftest men
Of the brave friends on whom he most depends ;
This does not look like preconcerted plots
Of secret murder, at this very hour
To be attempted.

MAHOMET.

No, Osmir, there is reason in thy words.

OSMIR.

But if your highness thinks it is expedient,
I will straightway arrest them.

MAHOMET (*after hesitating*).

No ; they are valiant men, and do as such

A a

Claim honour from a valiant foe. Go say,
That by the morning's dawn they shall have audience;
The open camp, with wide-mouth'd cannon
cloth'd,
And all my lofty garniture of war,
Shall be my hall of state. Secure those men
Until my farther orders. (*Pointing to Petronius
and Marthon, and exit, followed by Osmir.
Remain Petronius and Marthon guarded.*)

FIRST GUARD.

Come on, my masters, we'll conduct you safely.

MARTHON (*to Petronius*).

Is it to plunge me in this dreadful gulf
That your curs'd lessons have seduc'd my youth?

PETRONIUS.

Upbraid me not. I have not for myself
A better fate reserv'd. But we are noble,
And of high lineage; fear not, for the sultan
Will still respect us.

SECOND GUARD.

Ay, so belike he will; your noble heads
May with the royal scimitar be chopt,
If he is much inclin'd to honour you.
Some men ere now, in other sultans' days,
Have been so honour'd. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. *An open space in the camp, with the Janizaries and Turkish troops drawn up in order. Cannon and warlike engines seen mixed with the tents. A flourish of trumpets; enter MAHOMET, with OSMIR and his train, and places himself in a chair of state near the front of the stage. Another flourish of trumpets, and enter OTHUS, JUSTINIANI, and RODRIGO, with a small train of Attendants, walking slowly up the stage.*

MAHOMET (*to Osmir, as they come forward*).

These men approach us with a hardy step,
Nor wear the suppliant's humbled brow. Come
they

To sue or to command us? (*To Othus and the
other deputies, who make obeisance to him.*)

You are permitted to declare your errand.

If your hard-lesson'd chief, more prudent grown,
Will now resign his proud imperial city

Into the hands to whom high heaven's decree,
And power on earth resistless, soon shall give it,

I will receive that which he cannot hold

With grace and favour:

OTHUS.

High heaven's decrees are known to mortal man
But in th' event fulfill'd; and for earth's power,
The cannon flanked cohorts, and wide front
Of far extended numbers, shew it not
To him, who in the small and secret fortrefs,

E'en of one brave man's breast, more help discovers,
 Oft in th' astounding hour of the storm's pitch,
 Than in an armed host. Imperial Constantine
 Will live or die within his city's walls
 As may become their master.—Nevertheless,
 He will so far to hard necessity ———

MAHOMET.

I hear no more: your words are ineffectual,
 And fall as powerless as the ruffian's sword,
 Whom now, within my tent, your royal master,
 Compell'd no doubt by hard necessity,
 Has hired to murder me.

JUSTINIANI (*stepping boldly forward*).

Sultan, thou fittest where thou safely may'st
 Say what thou wilt, therefore of all mankind
 Thou most art bound to say but what is meet.
 Put those accusing words that thou hast utter'd
 Into the mouth of any other Turk,
 Wore he a giant's form, for in your camp
 I know that such there be, and I will prove it,
 With this good soldier's arm, a curst falsehood.

OTHUS (*to Justiniani, pulling him back*).

Thou art not wise.—Great sultan hear me speak.
 If any base attack upon your life
 Has been attempted, let the murd'rous villain,
 If still he breathes, be here before us brought.
 In presence of your highness we will question him:

Perchance he will confess what secret foe
Has arm'd his daring hand.

MAHOMET (*after giving orders to a guard in dumb show, who immediately goes out*).

Your suit is granted.

These men speak boldly, vizir. (*Aside to Osmir.*)

OSMIR (*aside to Mahomet*).

They shrink not from the proof.

Enter OTHORIC fettered and guarded.

MAHOMET (*to Othoric*).

As thou may'st hope a mitigated doom,
I here command thee that thou truly answer
Whate'er those Roman deputies demand.

OTHORIC.

I do not hope a mitigated doom,
And therefore, sultan, cannot be commanded:
But if this brave man here will question me,
(Pointing to Rodrigo.)
For in his presence I do feel my spirit
To manhood's height brac'd up, I'll truly answer,
Tho' every word did in my sinews fix
The burning pincer's tooth.

RODRIGO.

Ha! Othoric art thou not? the strong Hun-
garian?

OTHORIC (*smiling*).

Ay, thou remembrest my name—I thank thee—
It pleases me to think thou'lt ne'er forget it.
Ask what thou wilt, and I will answer thee ;
Bid me do what thou wilt, and I will do it,
Barring the hind'rance of these chains.

RODRIGO.

Thanks to thee !
Then, whatsoe'er the sultan asks of thee,
Answer him truly. He will point his questions
Where his suspicion points.

OTHORIC.

I will obey.

MAHOMET (*sternly*).

Who hired thee, thou bold and hard-brow'd
villain,
Such horrid deed to do ?

OTHORIC.

I have been twice hired, mighty Mahomet,
'To do fell deeds, in which I've lack'd performance,

MAHOMET.

And who first hired thee ?

OTHORIC.

Thyself.

MAHOMET.

Base traitor !
Dar'ft thou belie me to my very face ?

OTHORIC.

That I belie thee not be this my token ;
My hire was given to me by Petronius,
Told from a fable bag, on whose seal'd mouth
Thy fcimitar and crefcent were imprefs'd.

OTHUS.

Petronius !

OTHORIC.

Yes, that fmooth, fubtle Greek.

MAHOMET.

He hir'd thee not to take the life of Constantine ?

OTHORIC.

True ; I was hir'd for wafteful infurrection,
Not for delib'rate murder. Tho' moft wretched,
A ftranger, grip'd by hard neceffity,
The price he gave me ne'er had bought this arm
To fuch an act.

MAHOMET.

And who did hire thee for this fecond deed,
Which thou muft needs delib'rate murder call ?

OTHORIC.

'Twas Constantine.

JUSTINIANI.

Thou liest, foul, artful villain!

MAHOMET.

Peace I command! ye shall not interrupt him.
'Twas Constantine that hir'd thee?

OTHORIC.

Yes, great sultan!
But not with gold, and he himself, I ween,
Unconscious of the act.

MAHOMET.

What did he bribe thee with?

OTHORIC.

With that which does but seldom prove the means
Of like corruption—gen'rous admiration
Of noble manly virtue. I beheld him,
Like a brave stag encompass'd by base curs,
And it did tempt me.—Other bribe than this
Have I had none; and to no mortal ear
Did I reveal my purpose.

*(Mahomet puts his hand on his forehead and
seems disturbed, whilst the deputies hold up
their hands exultingly.)*

RODRIGO (*to Othoric*).

O for a galley mann'd with such as thou art,
 Therewith to face a hundred armed ships,
 Creatur'd with meaner life !
 Yet thou must die, brave heart ! yet thou must die.
 Thou hast done that which in no circumstance
 Man's hand may do, and therefore thou must
 perish.
 But I'll remember thee : thy name is Othoric :
 I will remember thee.

OSMIR (*to Mahomet, who covers his face and seems
 disturb'd, after a pause*).

Your highness gives no orders to your slave
 Touching the prisoner.

MAHOMET (*uncovering his face angrily*).
 His crime is plain : death be his instant doom.

OSMIR.

And in what mode ? or simple or with pains ?

MAHOMET.

Distract me not.

OTHORIC.

Vizir, be not so hasty.
 I bear with me what will redeem my life,
 And gain the sultan's pardon.

OSMIR.

Ah! thinkest thou to gain him with that bribe
Which Constantine gave thee? (*Shaking his head.*)

OTHORIC.

No, not with that. I wear upon this arm
A potent band, with subtile magic wrought,
That, wheresoe'er 'tis on my body rubb'd
With mutter'd words which I alone do know,
Maketh the part firm and invulnerable
To sword, or bullet, or the arrow's point—
To all offensive things. Believe me not,
But see the proof.—Relieve mine arms, I pray,
That I may shew this wonder.

MAHOMET.

Unlock his fetters: if he tamper with us,
His tortures are enhanced.

OTHORIC (*to the guard who stands next him, after
he has been unfettered, and at the same time un-
covering his left arm*).

Young Turk, thou wear'st a dagger by thy side:
To shew that I am made as other men,
Of flesh and blood as soft and sensitive,
When with no charm secur'd, thrust it, I pray
thee,
Into this nerved flesh. Nay, do not shrink,
For I shrink not.

MAHOMET.

Do it, thou timid slave!

(The guard slightly wounds Othoric's arm with the point of the dagger.)

OTHORIC.

You see it is an arm of flesh and blood;
And so you'll find my body in all parts,
Thrust where you will.—But mark me; where-
foe'er

I rub this band, your weapens have no power.

(Opening his breast and rubbing it with a bracelet which he takes from his arm, at the same time muttering some mystical words to himself.)

Now try if e'er the stoutest arm amongst you,
With pike, or spear, or keenly-temper'd blade,
Can pierce this charmed breast.

MAHOMET *(to an Attendant)*.

Attempt it, brawny slave; thine arm is strong.

(To Osmir.) Give him a stronger weapon.—Now the proof! *(The slave receiving a sword from Osmir, runs with full force upon Othoric, who falls down, pierced through the breast, and utters a convulsive laugh as he expires.)*

RODRIGO *(exultingly)*.

O, bravely done, thou spirit of true proof!

JUSTINIANI.

Yes, nobly has he shunn'd the degradation
Of slavish punishment.

OTHUS.

It was a lofty mind in a rude state
Of wild distorted virtue; cross the fancy
It stalks a gloomy, dark, gigantic shade,
Angel or fiend we know not.

MAHOMET (*aside to himself turning gloomily away*).

And Constantine is serv'd by men like these!

OTHUS (*to Mahomet*).

Seeing that of this crime our royal master
Doth clearly stand acquitted, by your word,
Most mighty Mahomet, we are permitted
To state his wishes.

MAHOMET.

No, ambassadors;
I have already said I hear no more
Unless ye yield the city.—Leave ye have
In safety to return.—You and your chief
O'er a volcano's thinly-bridged gulf
Have ta'en your stand, and the dire crash is near.

OTHUS.

And with our chief in that tremendous ruin,
If it must be, we will sink lovingly.

JUSTINIANI.

We will sink honourably.

RODRIGO.

We will sink gloriously. Ay, by heaven's light,
And cheerly too, great sultan! (*Passing the body
of Othoric as they turn to go away.*)

Thou noble wreck, thou wert rigg'd gallantly!
(*Exeunt Othus, Justiniani, Rodrigo, and their
attendants.*)

MAHOMET (*coming forward to the front of the stage,
and standing for some time in a thoughtful posture
much disturbed.*)

And Constantine is serv'd by men like these!

OSMIR (*to slaves, pointing to the body of Othoric*).

Take up the carcase of that savage ruffian,
And stick it on a stake for vulture's food.

MAHOMET (*turning round angrily*).

No, reptiles! let it have a soldier's grave.

OSMIR.

This is exceeding mercy; ne'ertheless,
Your orders, mighty prince, shall be obey'd
By those who are as dust beneath your feet.

MAHOMET.

Yes, I do know that I shall be obey'd.

By those who are——I am begirt with slaves.

(Turning away, and stamping on the ground as he walks.)

Mine enemy is serv'd by men like these!

I will give orders with all pressing speed

That now my grand attack forthwith be made:

What next may be attempted by such foes

Who may divine.

OSMIR.

That is the safest counsel.

(Exeunt Mahomet, tossing his arms and muttering as he goes out.)

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

An out-post belonging to the Turkish camp, with a view of the city of Constantinople on the back ground, seen in the dimness of cloudy moonlight.

Enter several Turkish Soldiers by different ways, meeting one another.

FIRST TURK.

Ho! who are ye? our friends?

SECOND TURK.

I know thy voice.

FIRST TURK.

Yes, we are friends; but let us separate,
And gain our tents as quickly as we may:
For now thro' all the camp the busy stir
Of warlike preparation is begun;
And ere the morning dawn, each armed Turk
Must hold him ready for th' approaching day
Of havock, blood, and spoil. Come, let us on!

THIRD TURK.

Yes; but, good comrades, do once more look
back,

And see, thro' the wan night, those buildings
gleam
With the last Christian fires that e'er shall burn
Within those circling walls.

SECOND TURK.

Ay, there the Prophet has prepar'd our rest.
There soon, midst heap'd-up spoils, and the wild
wailings
Of fetter'd beauty, in our new-won homes,
We'll cast our reeking scimitars aside,
And lay us down in soft and lordly sloth.
Comrades, it is an animating fight.
But quickly let us gain our tents.—Hush! hush!
What Turk comes prowling this way, and alone?
It looks like Mahomet.

FIRST TURK.

It is the sultan on his nightly rounds,
Disguis'd; let us avoid him.

THIRD TURK.

I'd rather cross a tiger on my way;
For, as the humour hits, it may be fatal
To know or not to know him. At the best
We shall be deem'd but lawless stragglers here:
Let us all separate and gain our tents.

(Exeunt hastily, all different ways.)

Enter MAHOMET disguised, followed at a distance by the Vizir.

MAHOMET (*alone, after walking thoughtfully from the bottom of the stage, whilst Osmir remains on the back ground*).

What boots this restless wish? 'tis all blank
silence

On that for which my greedy ears still watch.
There's ne'er a Turk, who, o'er his ev'ning pipe,
Will not far rather talk of daring feats
By petty robbers done, than all the fame
And grand achievements of his sov'reign lord.
'Tis cheerless silence all! Dull, stupid race!
They arm them for to-morrow's fight, 'tis true,
With much alacrity, and talk of conquest,
Carnage, and spoils; but for their sultan's name,
The name of Mahomet, thro' all the camp
I've scarcely heard its sound. Nay, once I heard it
In accents harsh pronounc'd, but as to listen
I nearer drew, my steps the speaker scar'd,
And all was into fearful silence hush'd.
Their sultan's name!—Pest seize the stupid slaves!
O, Constantine! it is not thus thy soldiers
Do arm themselves for thee.
Ho, Osmir! art thou near me?

OSMIR (*advancing*).

Yes, my lord.

MAHOMET.

Hast thou been list'ning too?

B b

OSMIR.

Yes, sultan ; and I find your Muffulmen
 Their arms preparing for to-morrow's battle,
 Beneath your royal standard most determin'd
 To conquer or to die.
 They under your approving eye will fight,
 As in the sunshine of propitious heaven.

MAHOMET.

Yes, I am in their minds full truly grown
 A thing of gen'ral attributes compos'd—
 A heaven of sunshine or of lowering storms :
 But as a man and leader, in whom live
 The mental and corporeal qualities
 Of Mahomet — Pest seize the stupid slaves !

*Enter PETRONIUS and MARTON, muffled up
 in cloaks.*

But who comes here ? twice on my rounds already
 Those men have cross'd me : am I known to them ?
 By the great Prophet they shall bear their secret
 Where secrets are secure !—Ho ! stop slaves there !
 Stop, in the sultan's name ! (*Running upon them fu-
 riously, and lifting his scimitar over the head
 of Petronius, who immediately discovers him-
 self.*)

PETRONIUS (*discovering himself*).

Crush not a worm, my lord.

MAHOMET.

A worm indeed ! What treason brings ye here,

Sculking, thus muffled up in dark disguise ?
 Have I not warn'd ye both that ye do live
 Beneath mine iron power in strictest faultlessness ?
 For that when ye are found but to transgress
 The galling limits of imposed duty
 Even a hair's breadth, there abideth you
 A recompence more dreadful than torn slaves,
 Writhing in horrid ecstasy, e'er knew.
 Beware : ye have no power to serve me now,
 And unsuccessful traitors are most hateful.

PETRONIUS.

It is, great Mahomet, to make amends
 For unsuccessful services, that here
 Thou find'st us, on our way within the city
 To gain for thee some useful information
 Against to-morrow's push. Still in our power
 Some little aid remains.

MAHOMET.

If thou say'st true, return to me again,
 Leading thy beauteous daughter in thy hand,
 Ere two hours pass, who shall within my tent
 A pledge remain for thy suspicious faith
 Until the city's ta'en.—Begone, I charge you,
 And answer not again. (*Exeunt Petronius and*
Marthon.

Are all mine orders issued for the morrow ?
 To each respective officer assign'd
 His task and station ? and my rearward troops,
 Mine axe and cord-men, they are not forgotten ?

OSMIR.

No, please your highness, nothing is forgotten.
 And by the early dawn — (*A mixture of confused
 distant sounds heard from the city.*)

MAHOMET.

What sounds are these?

OSMIR.

Hast thou forgot we are so near the city?
 It is the murm'ring night-sounds of her streets,
 Which the soft breeze wafts to thine ear, thus softly
 Mix'd with the chafings of the distant waves.

MAHOMET (*eagerly*).

And let me listen too! I love the sound!
 Like the last whispers of a dying enemy
 It comes to my pleas'd ear. (*Listening.*)
 Spent art thou, proud imperial queen of nations,
 And thy last accents are upon the wind.
 Thou hast but one voice more to utter; one
 Loud, frantic, terrible, and then art thou
 Amongst the nations heard no more. Lift! lift!
 I like it well! the lion hears afar
 Th' approaching prey, and shakes his bristling mane,
 And lashes with his tail his tawny sides,
 And so hear I this city's nightly sound.

OSMIR.

It is indeed a rich and noble conquest
 Which heaven unto its favour'd warrior gives.

MAHOMET.

Yes, Osmir ; I shall wear a conqu'ror's name,
 And other ages shall of Mah'met speak,
 When these dumb slaves are crumbling in the dust.
 But now the night wears on, and with the dawn
 Must the grand work begin.
 Yet one thing still remains; I must remind thee
 That to my gen'ral orders this be added :—
 Silent shall be the march : nor drum, nor trump,
 Nor clash of arms, shall to the watchful foe
 Our near approach betray : silent and soft,
 As the pard's velvet foot on Libya's sands,
 Slow stealing with crouch'd shoulders on her prey.

OSMIR.

I have already given the strictest orders.

MAHOMET.

Then all is well : go where thy duty calls.
 In the mean while I'll snatch an hour of rest,
 And dream, perhaps, that lovely Grecian dames,
 Even with a crowned beauty in their band,
 Are lowly bent to kiss my purple feet.

(A distant bell heard from the city.)

What deep and distant bell is this which sounds
 So solemnly on the still air of night ?

OSMIR.

It comes from St. Sophia's lofty dome,
 Where Constantine, with his small band of friends,

As I have learnt, should at this hour assemble,
 To join together in religious rites
 Of solemn preparation for to-morrow,
 Which they regard as their last day of life,
 And this as their last act of social brotherhood.

MAHOMET.

Brave men ! do they so meet ? *(Pausing.)*
 But it must be.
 Why should it move me ? Heaven decrees their
 doom :
 I act by high commission, tho' for instruments
 I have but these dumb slaves. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE II. *A pillared aisle or open space in the church of St. Sophia, with other parts of the church seen in perspective. The great bell heard.*

Enter HEUGHO, met by an inferior Priest.

PRIEST.

'Thou com'st before thy master and his friends :
 How far are they behind ?

HEUGHO.

Not many paces. *(Bell sounds again.)*

PRIEST.

Wherefore did'st thou start ?

HEUGHO.

It smote mine ear most strange and dolefully.
Is there soul in its sound which sadly says,
It is the last bell that shall Christians warn
To holy rites within these fated walls?
How many hundred years this sacred pavement
Has with the tread of Christian feet been worn!
And now —— Heaven's will be done!

PRIEST.

So must we say, if that our turn be come.
We are a wicked and luxurious race,
And we have pull'd this ruin on our heads.

HEUGHO.

But there are those who needs must fall be-
neath it,
Whose noble worth deserv'd a better fate.

PRIEST.

Think ye the grand assault will be so soon?

HEUGHO.

'Tis so believ'd: and see where now they come,
In gen'rous love and brotherhood united,
Who shall, perhaps, no more see evening's close,
Or under social roof of living men
E'er meet again.

PRIEST.

Nay, do not weep, good Heugho ;
 For in that blessed place they shall be join'd
 Where great and good men meet.—But I must
 haste
 To give my brethren notice. *(Exit.*

Enter CONSTANTINE, *with* OTHUS, RODRIGO,
 JUSTINIANI, *and others of his friends, who walk*
with solemn steps and bareheaded towards the
front of the stage, the great bell sounding for the
last time as they advance. Constantine then stops,
and stretching out his arm as if he wished to speak,
they all gather respectfully round him.

CONSTANTINE.

My friends, there greatly presses on my heart
 Somewhat I've much desir'd to say to you.
 If a full heart will grant me so much voice.

OTHUS.

Then speak it, royal sire, we all attend
 With ears of love and most profound respect.

CONSTANTINE.

Thus station'd on a dark and awful verge,
 In company with you, my noble friends,
 I have desired, in this solemn act,
 To make my peace with God. But, on my soul,

If any unforgiven wrong to man
 Yet rests, how shall I lift my hands to him
 Who has made all men, and who cares for all,
 As children of one grand and wond'rous house,
 Wherein the mightiest monarch of the earth
 Holds but a little nook ?

I have been one, plac'd on a giddy height
 Of seeming greatness, therefore liable,
 In nature's poor infirmity, to acts
 Of blind and foolish pride. I have been one
 In much real feebleness, upheld, defended,
 By voluntary aid and gen'rous zeal
 Of valiant strangers owing me no service.
 And therefore liable, in the mind's weakness,
 Its saddest weakness, to ungrateful thoughts
 Tinctur'd with jealousy. If towards you,
 My noble friends, I have contracted guilt,
 I trust—I know—I beg—what shall I say ?
 Your gen'rous hearts to all your deeds of love
 Will add a last forgiveness.

OTHUS.

O no, most royal Constantine ! to us
 And to all men thou'st ever worthy been,
 Noble and gracious ; pardon at our hands
 Thou needest none.

OMNES.

O no, thou needest none !
 As we to thee have faithful followers been,
 Thou'st ever been to us a gen'rous lord.

CONSTANTINE.

Your love would make it so : would that, indeed,

A voice within me seal'd its fair report !

Alas ! it doth not ; therefore now indulge me.

If there be one amongst you, unto whom,

With dark forbidding brow, in a stern moment,

I've given ungen'rous pain ; one whose kind service.

I have with foolish and capricious humours

More irksome made ; one whose frank openness

Of manly love, offer'd to me as man

In gen'rous confidence, with heartless pride

I coldly have repell'd ; yea, if there be

One of you all that ever from my presence

I have with sadden'd heart unkindly sent,

I here, in meek repentance, of him crave

A brother's hand, in token of forgiveness.

And be it in true charity stretch'd forth,

As to a man of much infirmity,

Who has with many trials been beset,

Wounding oft-times in bitterness of soul

The love he should have honour'd.

What ! is there none that will to me hold out

The palm of charity ?

Then I'll embrace ye all, and, with eas'd heart,

Believe myself forgiven. (*Embracing them all as they crowd affectionately to him, and comin
last to Rodrigo.*)

And thou, my bold Rodrigo, who canst brave

The tempests when they rage, and onward bear,
 With the opposed strength of towering navies
 Black'ning before thee, com'st thou to my breast
 In soft forgiving love? I know thou dost,

RODRIGO.

Ay, in that love that would forgive to thee
 The sum of all thy sins, tho' multiplied
 Ten thousand thousand fold.—
 That would do in thy service—O cursed limit!
 That there should be what to man's finew'd
 strength,
 In all the burning zeal of righteous boldness,
 Impossible is. *(Clenching his hands vehemently.)*

OTHUS *(to Rodrigo)*.

Cease! dost thou not respect these holy walls?

RODRIGO.

I do respect them, Othus; ne'er a head,
 Shorn to the scalp, doth bow itself more humbly
 Before heaven's throne than mine, albeit in truth
 My words unseemly are.

CONSTANTINE.

Come to my heart, my friend! He reigns above
 Who will forgive us both. *(Embraces Rodrigo,
 and then observing Heugho, who has stood
 behind, not presuming to approach him with
 the rest.)*

But there is one who stands from me aloof

With modest backwardness, unto whose charity
 I must be debtor also. Worthy Heugho,
 Since earliest youth I from thy friendly hand
 Have daily kindly offices receiv'd,
 Proffer'd with love, exceeding far all duty
 Belonging to thy state; yet, ne'ertheless,
 I once, in a most vile and fretful mood,
 Vex'd with cross things, thine honour'd age for-
 got.

HEUGHO.

Oh, say not so, my dear and royal master.
 It breaks my heart that you should still remember.

CONSTANTINE.

Well, well, be not thus mov'd, my worthy
 Heugho,
 I know I am forgiv'n; but lay thy hand,
 Thine aged hand, upon thy master's head,
 And give him a last blessing. Thou art now
 Like to an ancient father with us grown,
 And my heart says that it will do me good.

*(Bowing his head, whilst Heugho, lifting up
 his aged hands over him, is unable to speak,
 but bursts into tears, and falls upon his mas-
 ter's neck. The band of friends close round
 and conceal them: afterwards they open to
 make way, and Constantine comes forward
 with a firm enlightened countenance.)*

And now, my noble friends, it pleases me
 To think we all are knit in holy bands

Of fellowship ; prepar'd, in virtue's strength,
Nobly to fight on earth, or meet in heaven.

OTHUS.

Yes, Constantine, we to each other will
True brothers prove, and to our noble chief
Devoted followers, whate'er betide.
What say ye, valiant friends ?

OMNES.

All, all of us !

CONSTANTINE.

I know you will, full well, I know you will.
Oh, that in earth it had been granted me
Your gen'rous love to've recompens'd ! alas !
Ye can but share with me ———

OMNES.

No other recompense,
But sharing fates with thee, our noble chief,
Do we desire, and on thy royal hand
Here will we seal it.

CONSTANTINE (*eagerly preventing them as they are
about to kneel and kiss his hands*).

Forbear ! forbear ! within these sacred walls
Bend before worthless man the humble knee !
Fye, let not such shame be !
Am I your chief ? then be it shewn in this,
That to the mighty Majesty of heaven

I humbly bow, more lowly than ye all,
 And do, on your behalf, devoutly beg
 The blessing of our Master and our Sire.

(Kneeling and bowing his head very low to the ground, then rising afterwards with dignified solemnity.)

Now to those sacred rites of our blest faith,
 In which the humble soul ennobled bows,
 In mem'ry of the dearest brothership
 That ever honour'd man, I lead you on,
 My noble brothers. *(Exeunt Constantine, &c. by another aisle, which may be supposed to lead to the altar of the church, whilst several priests are seen at a distance in their robes, as if waiting to receive them.)*

SCENE III. *A Hall, or Anti-room in the Imperial Palace.*

Enter PETRONIUS and MARTHON disguised.

PETRONIUS.

So far hath this well-counterfeited signet,
 And this disguise, befriended us: here stop:
 Whilst Constantine and his mad band are absent
 On their religious ceremony, here
 We will remain conceal'd until that Ella,
 Returning (for 'tis near her wonted time,
 As they have told us) from Valeria's chamber,
 Shall give us fair occasion.—Rouse thee, Marthon;

Thou seem'st like one bereaved of all sense ;
What is the matter with thee ?

MARTHON.

Nothing ; but thus to pass with culprit feet
Beneath the shade of night, these well-known
courts
Which I so oft have trod in front of day,
With the firm footsteps of an honest man,
Doth make me ———

PETRONIUS.

Fye ! thou art become a fool.
Shake off such weakness : we're compell'd to this.
We shall beneath the sultan's iron sway,
Disgrac'd from the late failure of our plots,
Live like lash'd slaves, if the bewitching beauty
Of my young Ella come not to our aid
To bend his rugged nature. Strong in her,
We shall not merely safe protection find,
But highest favour and authority ;
And tho' by stealth I needs must bear her hence,
Being my daughter, I, in nature's right ———

MARTHON.

Hush ! now I hear a lightly-sounding step.
Draw back a little space. (*They step aside, whilst
Ella enters, and walks across the stage.*)

PETRONIUS (*in a half-voice, stealing softly up to her.*)

Ella !

ELLA (*starting*).

What voice is that which names me?

PETRONIUS.

Ella!

ELLA.

Oh! 'tis the sound that I most dread to hear!

PETRONIUS.

Say'st thou so, Ella, of thy father's voice?
Have my misfortunes, with the world's fair favour,
Depriv'd me also of my only child?

ELLA.

No, no! they have not: had misfortune only
Cast its dark shade upon thee, I had lov'd thee
And cherish'd thee in a lone desert, father.
But—but thou art ———

PETRONIUS.

Ha! wherefore dost thou pause?
What would'st thou say? what is there in thy
mind?

ELLA.

Thoughts which I will not utter.—Oh, depart!
Thou'rt not in safety. All men do condemn thee.
Thou art not come for good.—Oh, fly from hence!
Ruin, and flame, and death abide thee here:
Oh, fly, my wretched father.

PETRONIUS.

Yes, I will fly, but thou shalt go with me ;
If not, I will remain and meet my fate.

ELLA.

Good heaven forbid ! thou'lt drive me to distraction.

O misery ! *(Wringing her hands in great distress, whilst Marthon advances to Petronius with supplicating look.)*

PETRONIUS.

Away ! thou art a fool : we must be firm.

(To Marthon.)

Wring not thy hands thus wildly, simple maid :
Thou goest to be with me no wand'ring outlaw,
But one in splendour greater than a queen :
The favour'd mistress of the mighty sultan. *(To Ella.)*
(Ella gives a loud shriek, and struggles to get from him.)

Enter RODRIGO.

RODRIGO.

Audacious villain ! quit thy cursed hold,
Or take death for thy pains.
Ha ! thou shrink'st back, and mufflest up thy face.
Say who thou art, or thro' thy villain's heart
I'll thrust this rapier.

ELLA (*pulling Rodrigo back*).

Hold, I do beseech thee !
For pity, hold ! it is my wretched father.

RODRIGO.

Wretched indeed !

ELLA.

Ay, therefore pity him.
Let him escape : he hath done me no harm.
He is here as a fox in his last wiles,
Who shelter seeks within the very kennel
O' the rous'd pack : Oh, have some pity on him !
He is my father.

RODRIGO.

Sweet Ella, hang not thus upon mine arm :
It hath no power to strike whom thou call'st father,
Shame as he is unto that honour'd name.
But there are ties upon me, gentle maid :
The safety and the interests of Constantine
I am bound to defend : and shall a traitor ———

ELLA.

Oh ! oh !

RODRIGO.

Fear not : our royal master is return'd
From blessed rites of holiest charity
With meekly chasten'd soul : whate'er his crimes.

He is in safety—safety as assured
As thine own harmless self.

Enter CONSTANTINE.

CONSTANTINE (*to* Rodrigo).

Thou speak'st with an unwonted earnestness ;
I've mark'd thy gestures ; something moves thee
much.

Who are these strangers ? (*Turning to Petronius
and Marthon, who, uncovering their faces,
stand confessed before him.*)

Ha ! Marthon and Petronius ! What new treason
Is now on foot, that here —— but judge I harshly ?
Ye are, perhaps, struck with the circumstances
Of these most solemn times, repentant grown,
And if ye be, in a good hour ye come ;
I am myself a wean'd and pardon'd man.
Marthon, thou once wert wont to speak the truth ;
What brought ye hither ?

MARTHON.

Most gracious prince, with no repentant mind
We hither came ; but one of us, at least,
Shall hence depart with a heart deeply smitten.

CONSTANTINE.

Confess then what new treason ye devised.

ELLA.

No treason ; none to thee, most royal Constan-
tine.

For me he came, arm'd with a parent's right,
 To bear me to the haughty sultan's camp,
 To live in queenly state. But, Oh protect me!
 Let me remain and die with those I love
 In decent maiden pride. Retain me here,
 But pardon him: no treason brought him hither.

CONSTANTINE.

Petronius, has thy daughter told me true;
 Was this thine errand?

PETRONIUS (*approaching Constantine*).
 Yes, most gracious prince.

CONSTANTINE.

Off then, disgrace to nature and to manhood!
 Would'st thou to shameful and degrading slavery
 Betray thy virtuous child? Say thou cam'st hither
 To thrust i' the dark thy dagger thro' my heart,
 And I will call thee sinless.

PETRONIUS.

Wherefore this stern and bitter execration?
 I came to place her but a few hours sooner,
 Sav'd from th' approaching storm, where your high
 dames,
 Yea, with their royal mistress at their head,
 Full shortly shall be placed.

CONSTANTINE.

Detested wretch! what fiend has whisper'd to
 thee
 Such hideous thoughts? man durst not utter them.

PETRONIUS.

Man might, at least, surveying the position
 And aspect of these times, in his own mind
 This plain and shrewd conjecture form. But not
 On such loose bottom do I ground my words ;
 Mah'met himself hath sworn that your Valeria
 Shall at the head of his most favour'd wives —

CONSTANTINE.

Hold thy detested tongue ! for one word more
 Is instant death. Tempt me not with these hands,
 Which hath the symbols touch'd of blessed peace,
 To do a horrible act.

PETRONIUS.

I but repeat that which the sultan hath
 In public said.

CONSTANTINE.

Forbear ! forbear ! I tell thee.

*(Wrenching his sword, scabbard and all, from
 his side, and tossing it from him.)*

There ! there ! Rodrigo : cast it from my reach :
 Let not a weapon be within my grasp,

Or I shall be accursed. *(After a violent struggle of
 passion.)*

I dare speak to him now.—Ho ! guards without !

ELLA.

Oh, mercy ! mercy !

Enter GUARDS.

CONSTANTINE (*to Guards*).

Take these two men, Petronius and his friend,
And thro' the city to our outmost post
Conduct them safely: there, in perfect liberty,
Permit them to depart where'er they list.
(*To Petronius.*) Now, I'm revenged upon thee: get
thee hence,
And utter not a word.—Go thou, Rodrigo,
And with the gentle Ella in thy hand,
Conduct them to the palace gate. Hence quickly!

MARTHON.

Nay, let Petronius go: I will remain,
And with the meanest foldier on your walls
Spend my last blood, if a true penitent —

CONSTANTINE (*waving him off impatiently*).

Well, be it as thou wilt: but hence and leave me!

RODRIGO (*to Ella, as he leads her out*).

Did I not tell thee he was safe, my Ella?

(*Exeunt all but Constantine, who, after walking up and down for some time in a perturbed manner, starts at the sound of Valeria's voice without.*)

CONSTANTINE.

Ha! here she comes! alas! how shall I now

Look on her face, and hear her voice of love !
It is distraction !

Enter VALERIA.

VALERIA.

My Constantine, art thou so long return'd,
And yet to me no kindly summons sent,
Long as I've watch'd for it ?—What is the matter ?
Thy brow is dark : these are disturbed looks :
What is the matter ?

CONSTANTINE.

Nothing, nothing.

I am, thou know'st, with many cares perplex'd.
Follow me to thine own apartment ; here
I cannot speak to thee.

VALERIA (*aside, looking eagerly at him as, they go out*).

What may this be !

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV. Valeria's Apartment.

Enter CONSTANTINE, followed by VALERIA, who remain silent for some time, she looking anxiously with wistful expectation.

VALERIA.

Now we are here, my Lord, in the still privacy
Of this my inmost bower, but thou art silent.

(*Pauses, and he is still silent.*)

'There is a look of sadness on thy face
Of disturb'd wretchedness, that never yet,
Ev'n in thy darkest hours, I've seen thee wear :
Why art thou thus ?

CONSTANTINE.

And dost thou ask ? I've been, in deep humility,
Making a sinner's peace with God and man,
And now —— and now —— (*His voice faltering.*)

VALERIA.

What would you say, my lord ?

CONSTANTINE.

And now I am with thee.

VALERIA.

And art thou sad for this ? hast thou not still,
Loose from all shackles of imposed state,
Been with me in thine hours of joy or grief,
Like a way-faring man, who sitting down
On the green bank, his cumb'rous vestment opens
To the soft breeze ?

CONSTANTINE.

Yes, my Valeria ; I have been with thee
As with a true yoke heart, so strong in love
That ev'n the thought which scudded o'er my
mind
With culprit's speed from shameful consciousness,
Was not from thee conceal'd.

But now the hour is come, when ev'n with thee
I must perform a task—a task of pain.

VALERIA.

Speak ; what mean'st thou ?

CONSTANTINE.

All have, ev'n in the dearest intercourse
Of heart with heart, in some untoward moment
Transgressors been, and prov'd the cause of pain
Where most they should have banish'd it : and all,
In quitting earthly ties, do anxiously
Desire, in the true blessing of forgiveness,
To part with those whom they have held most dear.
Now dost thou understand me ? *(Holding out both
his hands to her.)*

VALERIA.

I do ! I do ! thou hast my dearest blessing.
The dearest thoughts and worship of my heart.
But oh ! what dost thou say ?—part !—how, my
Constantine !
Where dost thou go ? thou dost not leave the city ?

CONSTANTINE.

No, love, but on its wall I go ere long,—
For in a little hour the day will break
Which must its fate decide,—that part to act,
Which, before God and man, in honest pride,
I'm call'd on to perform.

VALERIA.

But from those walls victorious thou'lt return.

(Constantine *smiles sorrowfully.*)

Nay, but thou shalt return: high heav'n decrees it;
 Virtue, and every good and blessed thing
 Have made it sure. Ev'n in a faith as strong
 As at this moment I do hold to this,
 Methinks, upon the chaf'd and tossing waves
 Of the wild deep I could thus firmly tread,
 Nor wet my sandal's thong. (*Walking across the
 stage with firm steps of stately confidence, and
 then going up to him with an encouraging
 smile.*)

Be thou assur'd !

I know it shall be so. A mystic sage,
 Whom I, unknown to thee, have visited—
 Pardon this weakness of thine anxious wife—
 Darting his eye on forms of woven air,
 Saw thee in combat with a Turkish champion,
 And saw the crescent fall.

CONSTANTINE.

And may'st thou not believe, that ere they close
 Their mortal warfare, many a boastful Turk
 Beneath these arms shall fall ?

VALERIA.

Ay, but on surer words I rest my faith !
 For I did bid him onward cast his eye
 Into time's reach, and say, who of this city,

After the course of twelve revolving moons,
Should be the sov'reign lord ; and he replied,
In plain and simple words, thy lord and husband.

CONSTANTINE.

And nam'd he Constantine ?

VALERIA.

What other name but that of Constantine
Could to these appellations be conjoin'd ?
Thou turnest from me with perturbed looks :
Thou shalt not turn away : tell me ! O, tell me !
What sudden thought is this that troubles thee ?
*(Catching hold of him eagerly as he turns from
her.)*

CONSTANTINE.

Ask not ; Oh, do not ask ! 'tis pass'd already
As shoots a glaring meteor 'thwart the night,
Frightful but hasty.

VALERIA.

Thou must tell it me.

CONSTANTINE.

Distract me not.

VALERIA.

Nay, nay, but thou must tell me.
What other name but that of Constantine
Could to my lord and husband joined be ?

CONSTANTINE (*sinking down upon a chair quite overcome, and covering his face with his hands as he speaks with a quick perturbed voice*).

Mahomet! Mahomet!

(*Valeria steps back from him, holding up her hands in amazement; then he, after a pause, looking up to her with a self-upbraiding eye.*)

I have offended in this very hour

When my press'd soul sigh'd for that loving peace

Which in its earthly close the soul desires.

I have offended.

VALERIA.

Yes, thou hast offended.

All the offences thou hast ever done me

Are in this fell and cruel stroke compris'd;

And any other stroke, compared to this,

Had fall'n upon me lightly.

CONSTANTINE.

It was a thought that hasted fast away,

And came unbidden. (*Going up to her penitently.*)

VALERIA (*turning away in anger*).

There is no thought doth ever cross the mind

Till some preceding kindred sentiment

Hath made a path-way for it.

CONSTANTINE.

Yes, my Valeria, thou indeed say'st true;

But turn not from me angrily. My mind,
Ere now, consider'd has the character,
The faith, the power of Mahomet.—Frown not.—
Valeria thou art fair.—Nay, do not frown !

VALERIA.

What dost thou say? hast thou until this moment

Reserv'd for me this base degrading —— No :
Torn and defaced be every hated form
Of outward grace ! it is our curse, our shame !
(Tearing her hair violently.)

CONSTANTINE.

O be not thus !—forgive a hasty thought !
Think how a doating husband is distracted,
Who knows too well a lawless victor's power.

VALERIA.

What is his power ? it naught regardeth me.

CONSTANTINE.

Alas ! the frowns of a detesting bride
Deter him not !

VALERIA *(smiling contemptuously)*.

But will he wed the dead ?

CONSTANTINE (*starting*).

What say'st thou? Oh, what meaning is there here!

Yes, yes! I know it all! but it is dreadful:
It makes the cold chill o'er my limbs to creep:
It is not well: it is not holy. No!
O no, my noble love, mine honour'd love!
Give to thy fallen lord all that the soul
To widow'd love may give, but oh stop there?
Heav'n will protect thee in the hour of need;
And for the rest, erase it from thy thoughts,
Give it no being there.

VALERIA.

It hath no being there. Heav'n will protect me:
And he who thinks me helpless thinks me mean.

CONSTANTINE.

I think thee all that e'er was tenanted
Of noblest worth in loveliest female form:
By nature excellent, defective only
In this, that fortune has thy virtues link'd
To the vex'd spirit of a ruin'd man,
Who in his hours of anguish has not priz'd them
As did become their worth.

VALERIA (*rushing into his arms*).

No, thou hast priz'd them,
In thy blind love, far, far beyond their worth.

My uncurb'd passions have, alas ! too oft
Vexation added to that burden'd heart
I should have cheer'd and lighten'd : on my head
Rests all the blame that e'er between us pass'd,
And I alone have need to be forgiven.

(They weep on one another's necks without speaking, when an alarm bell is heard at a distance, and Constantine breaks suddenly from her.)

CONSTANTINE.

It is the 'larum of my farther watch.

VALERIA.

I scarcely heard it : art thou sure of it ?

(A second alarm bell heard nearer.)

CONSTANTINE.

And hark ! a nearer tower repeats the sound.
The enemy's in motion.—I must arm,
And instantly.

VALERIA.

Then let me be with thee till the last moment.
I have a holy relick of great power ;
It is, I trust, worth all thine arms beside ;
And from this hand of love thou shalt receive it.

CONSTANTINE *(smiling sorrowfully.)*

Thanks, sweet Valeria ! from thy hand of love

I will with love receive whate'er thou wilt.

(A third alarm bell is heard still louder, and enter Attendants in haste.)

Yes, yes, I heard it ; go, prepare mine arms.

(To Attendants, and exeunt.)

SCENE V. *A spacious Hall in the Palace.*

Enter RODRIGO, with ELLA hanging fondly upon him, and continue their way as if intending to pass through it, when a trumpet sounds without, and they stop short.

RODRIGO.

It is the sound that summons us to meet :
There is no farther grace : therefore, sweet Ella,
My pretty Ella, my good loving Ella,
My gentle little one that hang'st upon me
With such fond hold, in good sooth we must part,
Here bid heav'n bless me, and no farther go.

ELLA.

Must it be so ? I will bid heaven bless thee,
And all good fairs watch o'er thy precious life ;
And they will bless and guard thee in the hour
Of fearful death. In this I have true faith ;
Yet, on the very brink, to hold thee thus
Clasp'd in my grasp, and think how soon—Alas !
From many points will fly the whizzing balls,
And showering darts, and jav'lines sent afar,
Aim'd by fell strength ; wilt thou escape all this ?

RODRIGO.

Fear not, sweet Ella ! whizzing balls there be
That, in midway, are from their course declin'd
By the poor orphan's little lisped prayer ;
And there be arrows that are turn'd aside,
In their swift flight, by the soft sighs of love,
Unheard of earthly ears. This is a creed,
In the good faith of which poor seamen climb
Their rocking masts, in the full roar of battle,
And we'll believe it.

ELLA.

It is a blessed one : I would believe it.

RODRIGO.

Yes, we'll believe it. Whilst our battle roars,
Thou'lt think of me in thy lone distant tower,
And be to me a gallant armed mate,
With prayers and wishes striving powerfully.
Give me thy hand : we will not weep and wail :
We will part cheerfully.—God blefs thee, Ella !
Nay, hang not on me thus.
Thou lov'st a brave man : be thou valiant then,
As suits a brave man's love.

ELLA.

O no ! I've fondly fix'd myself upon thee,
Most worthless and unsuited to thy worth.
Like a poor weed on some proud turret's brow,
I wave, and nod, and kiss the air around thee,
But cannot be like thee.

D d

RODRIGO.

Heav'n blefs thee, little flower! I prize thee more
Than all the pride of female statelinefs.

ELLA.

Dost thou? then I am happy: I am proud:
I will not wifh me other than I am.

RODRIGO.

Ah, if we part not instantly, my Ella,
I feel in faith, rude as my nature is,
I foon fhall be like thee!—My friends approach:
Let us not meet their gaze—It must be fo—
Sweet one, farewel!—Wilt thou ftill cling to me?

ELLA.

O no, I go: they fhall not fee thee weep,
Tho' I do blefs thee for it.

RODRIGO (*leading her haftily back to the door by
which they entered*).

Well then, brave lafs, upon thy lovely head
Heaven's favour reft!—Nay, do not fpeak to me.

(*Preventing her as fhe is endeavouring to fpeak.*)
Farewel! farewel! (*Exit Ella, and he returns to
the front of the ftage, where he ftands mufing
forrowfully; when enters to him Iuftiniani,
and, going up to him, touches his fhoulder.*)
What doft thou want? (*Turning angrily.*)

JUSTINIANI.

Thou'rt thoughtful.

RODRIGO.

No, I think as others do
With such day's work before them, in good truth,
Not passing merrily.

JUSTINIANI.

From the high tower I've seen th' approaching
foe :

It seems a dark and strangely-mixed mass
Of life, wide moving in the misty light
Of early dawn.—I've fought in many a field,
As valiant men and armed warriors fight,
But such a strange assemblage of new modes
Of mingled war as we this day must face,
I never yet encounter'd.

RODRIGO.

Well, we shall know the scent and flavour of it
When we have tasted it.

JUSTINIANI.

We shall be smother'd up with the mean press
Of worthless matter, as a noble steed,
Beneath the falling rafters of his shed
Ignobly perishes.

RODRIGO.

Fear not, proud soul; we shall have men to fight,

And room enough in some nook of the breach
To grapple with them too.

JUSTINIANI.

Good fortune ever shone on thee, Rodrigo :
Thou still hast been a bold careering bark,
Outriding ev'ry storm. If thou shouldst e'er
Again return to our dear native land,
Tell to my countrymen whate'er thou know'st
Pertaining to my fate this fateful day :
Let me not be forgotten.

RODRIGO.

I will, my friend : but better fate than thine
I look not for, tho' still I bear myself
As one assur'd of good.—Thou'rt dark and
gloomy—
Does aught rest on thy mind ?

JUSTINIANI (*striding away from him gloomily*).

No, nothing, nothing ! (*A trumpet sounds
without.*)

RODRIGO.

Ay, hark, another of our gallant band
Has join'd us with his followers.

(*Another trumpet sounds.*)

And now another : are they all assembled ?

Enter OTHUS, and several of the imperial Friends.

OTHUS.

On their high wooden turrets, and huge beams

Of warlike engines, rais'd aloft in air,
 Gleams the first light of this high-fated day ;
 And, wide expanded, thro' the farther mists
 Moves the dark Turkish host.

Thou'rt a tried soul, Rodrigo, I but new
 To such tremendous, strange expectancy :
 Now is the hour when the soul knows itself.

(Rising on tiptoe with a conscious smile.)

RODRIGO.

Ay, Othus, thou dost wear the countenance
 Of a true man : give me thine honest hand.
 Are all our friends assembled ? *(Trumpet sounds.)*

OTHUS.

This says they are : and here comes, last of all,
 Our northern friends.

Enter more of the Friends.

Now we are all assembled. Constantine,
 He also comes ; and sadly by his side,
 In mournful dignity, moves his high dame,
 Proudly contending with her woman's heart.

Enter CONSTANTINE and VALERIA, attended.

CONSTANTINE *(returning the general salute of the chiefs)*.

Good morrow, noble brothers and brave leaders :
 Are we all here conven'd ?

OTHUS.

Yes, our great chief and brother : of your friends
There lacks not one.

CONSTANTINE.

Then to their love, so help me, Mighty Power;
Who hold'st within thy grasp the souls of men !
Neither shall we be lacking.—Now, Valeria.

*(Drawing himself up with a proud but tender
smile, as if to encourage her to behave nobly.)*

VALERIA.

I understand that smile.

Here with thy gen'rous friends, whose love to thee
Most dearly celled in my heart I wear,
And unto whom I have desired much,
Before we part, these grateful thanks to pay—

(Making grateful obeisance to the chiefs.)

Here to those noble friends, and to God's keeping,
I leave thee.—Yet, be it permitted me—
For that thy noble head and lib'ral brow
Have ever cheer'd me as my star of day,
Blessings and blessings let me pour upon them !

*(Putting her hand upon his head fervently, and
kissing his forehead.)*

For that thy gen'rous breast has been the hold
Of all my 'treasur'd wishes and dear thoughts,
This fond embrace.

(Embracing him.)

Yea, and for that thou art

My fire, and sov'reign, and most honour'd lord,
This humble homage of my heart receive.

(Kneeling and kissing his hand.)

CONSTANTINE *(raising and embracing her with great emotion).*

No more, my dearest and most noble love!
Spare me, O spare me! Heaven be thy protection!
Farewel!

VALERIA.

Farewel! *(Valeria is led off by her Attendants, whilst Constantine continues looking sadly after her for some time, then turning to his friends, who gather about him, without saying a word, they go all off the stage together in profound silence.)*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *An open space near the walls of the city, with half-ruin'd houses on each side, and a row of arched pillars thrown across the middle of the stage, as if it were the remains of some ruined public building; thro' which is seen, in the back-ground, a breach in the walls, and the confused fighting of the besieged, enveloped in clouds of smoke and dust. The noise of artillery, the battering of engines, and the cries of the combatants heard as the curtain draws up, and many people discovered on the front of the stage, running about in great hurry and confusion, and some mounted upon the roofs of the houses overlooking the battle.*

VOICE (*calling from the wall*).

SEE! see! how, cluster'd on each other's backs,
They mount like swarming bees, or locusts link'd
In bolt'ring heaps! Pour fire upon their heads!

SECOND VOICE.

Cast down huge beams upon them!

THIRD VOICE.

Hurl down the loosen'd fragments of our wall!

FOURTH VOICE.

Ho ! more help here ! more stones ! more beams !
more fire !

Weapons are useless now.

FIRST VOICE.

See how that giant Turk, like an arch fiend,
Climbs on yon living mountain of curv'd backs !
He gains the wall ! O hurl him headlong down !
He is hurl'd down ! (*A great shout from the besieged.*)

SECOND VOICE.

Send to the emperor or to Rodrigo :
They on their diff'rent stations hold it bravely ;
This is the weakest point. Ho ! send for aid !

(*Exeunt several soldiers from the walls as if running for succour. The noise of artillery, &c. is heard as before, and afterwards a loud crash as of some building falling. Enter many people in great terror from the walls, running off by the front of the stage different ways, and enter at the same time, CONSTANTINE and some of his friends, who stop them.*)

CONSTANTINE.

Turn, turn ! O turn, my friends ! another push !
Let us still stop the breach, or fall like men.

(*Enter JUSTINIANI from the walls with a hasty and disordered step, pale and writhing with pain.*)

Merciful heav'n ! do mine eyes serve me truly ?
 Justiniani, with pale haggard face,
 Retiring from his post !
 Where are you going, chief ? (*Stopping him sternly.*)

JUSTINIANI.

Where nature, urg'd beyond the pith of nature,
 Compels me. Midst yon streams of liquid fires,
 And hurling ruins and o'erwhelming mass
 Of things unknown, unseen, uncalculable,
 All arms and occupation of a soldier
 Are lost and turn'd to naught : man's strength is
 naught :
 The fangs of hell are in my new-torn flesh ;
 I must on for a space and breathe fresh air,

CONSTANTINE.

Go to ! this moment is the quiv'ring ridge
 That stands between our success or our ruin :—
 The fight of thy turn'd back from their screw'd
 pitch
 Will turn more hearts than all the pressing foe :
 Thou must not go.

JUSTINIANI.

I am a mortal man :
 The fangs of fiends are in my new-torn flesh :
 Nature compels me, and I must have succour.
 (*Exit hastily, and writhing with pain.*)

CONSTANTINE.

Alas ! God pity him ! one luckless moment

Of weakness and of anguish brings to him
 A wound that cannot be up-bound. Poor nature!
(Enter many fugitives from the walls.)
 Turn, turn, O soldiers! let not this shame be.

(To the fugitives.)

(As he is endeavouring with his friends to rally them and push forward, a terrible shout is heard, and enter a great crowd of fugitives from the walls.)

What shout was that?

FUGITIVE,

The Turks have gain'd the breach, and thro' it
 pour
 Like an o'erboiling flood.

CONSTANTINE.

Then is the city lost—the dark hour come—
 And as an emperor my task is clos'd.
 God's will be done! *(Throwing away the imperial purple.)*

Now is there left for me these sinew'd arms,
 And this good sword, the wherewithal to earn
 A noble soldier's death.
 Come on with me who will, and share the fate
 Of a brave comrade.

A FUGITIVE *(joined by several others),*

Yes, we'll share thy fate,
 Comrade or sov'reign, noble Constantine!
 We will die by thy side. *(Exit Constantine, fol-*

lowed by his friends and several of the fugitives, and passing through the pillars to the back-ground, rushes amidst the confusion of the fight. A terrible noise of arms, &c. and presently one of the pillars in the middle of the stage falling down, a wider view of the battle is opened, and the Turks are seen rushing through the breach, and bearing every thing before them.)

Re-enter CONSTANTINE wounded, but still fighting bravely, though oppressed with numbers, and falls down near the front of the stage, the enemy passing on and leaving him.

CONSTANTINE.

Am I then left!

Oh, is there ne'er a Christian foldier near me
That will cut off my head? Ho! thou Turk there!
(To a Turk who is going to pass him.)

TURK.

Art thou not dead?

CONSTANTINE.

No, one half of me, Turk, is living still,
(Raising himself half up from the ground.)
And still a match for thee.

TURK.

Ha! say'st thou so? we'll put it to the proof.

Yet thou'rt a brave man, tho' thou art a Greek,
I would far rather let thee die in peace.

CONSTANTINE.

No, no ! have at thee ! (*pushing at the Turk with his sword, who turning against him as he is half raised from the ground, thrusts him through the body.*)

I thank thee, friendly foe-man, this will do :
Thou hast done me good service.

TURK.

And thou art welcome to it. Fare thee well !
A good death to thee ! for thou art no Greek.
(*Exit.*)

CONSTANTINE.

Ay, this will do : this hath the true stern gripe
Of potent speedy death. My task is closed.
I now put off these weeds of flesh and blood,
And, thanks be unto him who cloth'd me in them !
Untarnish'd with disgrace. What cometh after
Full surely cometh well. 'Tis a dark pass.—

(*Catching at a dropt garment that has been left by some of the fugitives on the ground near him.*)

Here is a ready shrowd to wrap my head :
This death deals shrewdly with me. (*Covers his face and dies, after a considerable struggle.*)

*Enter RODRIGO, OTHUS, and MARTON, with
two or three of their followers, fighting bravely with
a party of Turks, whom they beat off the stage.*

OTHUS.

Now for a space those ruffians stand aloof:
This is a pause that calls upon the mind:
What shall we do?

RODRIGO.

What do men do, when they together stand,
On the last perch of the swift-sinking wreck?
Do they not bravely give their parting cheer,
And make their last voice loud and boldly found
Amidst the hollow roarings of the storm?
Ev'n so will we: we'll bear our manhood up
To the last push.

OTHUS.

Thou speakest well, brave seaman: thou dost
speak
What the heart owns: we will do even so.
But Oh, that our brave leader now were near us,
Living or dead! Doth no one know his fate?
I thought by him t' have died.

FIRST FOLLOWER.

What corpse is this so cover'd? on its sandal
It wears th' imperial bird in fretted gold.

OTHUS.

Then it is he ! (*Tearing off the covering eagerly
from the head of Constantine.*)

O thou brave heart ! thou hast got to thy rest
With honour : heav'n be praised that thou hast !
Here round thee our last gathering point shall be :
Here will we fight, nor shall thy honour'd body
Suffer, whilst one of us has strength to fight,
The slightest insult.

RODRIGO.

Ay, they shall hack us into raven's meat;
Ere on his gallant corpse there be impress'd
One touch of impious hands ! (*A loud noise of
striking and terror heard without.*)

OTHUS.

Hear the wild cries of terror and despair,
Mix'd with the din of carnage ! Now those
cowards,
Who let this brave man all unaided perish,
Are suff'ring that which, in his fellest pinch,
The valiant never suffers.
But see, the enemy again returns
With doubled fury !

RODRIGO.

Come they ? then we are ready for them. Yonder
Stands a small walled dome, within whose portal
We for a time may face ten thousand foes :

There will we take our stand, and there will we
 Do our last deeds of men. Come on, brave mates!
 Take up our honour'd treasure; and, so burden'd,
 He that doth grapple with us had as lief
 Pull from the lion's hug his bosom'd whelp.

*(The followers take up the body, and Othus
 and Rodrigo retire, defending it bravely from
 a party of Turks, who enter and fall upon
 them as they are bearing it off.)*

SCENE II. *An apartment in one of the towers of
 the palace.*

*Enter VALERIA in great alarm, followed by LUCIA
 and Attendants.*

VALERIA.

Louder and louder still the dreadful sound
 Of battle swells. Is it not nearer us?
 This lofty tower the widest view commands;
 Open that lattice quickly. *(Pointing to a window
 which Lucia opens, and then, rushing on ca-
 gerly to look, shrinks back again.)*

I pray thee look thyself, mine eyes are dark,
 And I see nothing. Oh, what see'st thou?
 Tell me whate'er it be.

LUCIA *(looking out)*.

Nothing but clouds of smoke and eddying dust:
 A dun and grumly darkness spreads o'er all,
 From which arise those horrid sounds, but naught
 Distinctive of the fight can I discern.

VALERIA (*after pacing backward and forward with an unequal, restless, agitated step*).

Oh, will this state of tossing agony
No termination have! Send out, I pray thee,
Another messenger.

LUCIA.

Indeed I have in little space of time
Sent many forth, but none return again.

VALERIA.

In little space! Oh it hath been a term
Of horrible length! such as rack'd fiends do reckon
Upon their tossing beds of surgy flames,
Told by the lashes of each burning tide
That o'er them breaks.—Hark! the quick step of
one
With tidings fraught! Dost thou not hear it?

LUCIA.

No;

I hear it not.

VALERIA.

Still is it the false coinage of my fears?
Ah! hearing, sight, and every sense is now
False and deceitful grown.—I'll sit me down,
And think no more but let the black hour pass
In still and fixed stupor o'er my head. (*Sits down
upon a low seat, and supports her bended head
upon both her hands.*)

E e

LUCIA (*listening*).

Now I do hear the sound of real feet
In haste approaching.

VALERIA (*starting up*).

Some one brings us tidings.
What may they be? Quick steps should bring us
good.

Enter MESSENGER.

Say all thou hast to say, and say it quickly.
If it be good hold up thy blessed hand,
And I will bless the token.—No, thou dost not!
'Tis evil then.—How is it with my lord?
What dangers still encompass him?

MESSENGER.

No dangers.

VALERIA.

And dost thou say so with that terrible look?
Is he alive? Have all deserted him?

MESSENGER.

No, round his body still some brave men fight,
And will not quit him till they be as he is.

(*Valeria, uttering a loud shriek, falls back into
the arms of her attendants, and is carried off,
followed by Lucia and the Messenger.*)

SCENE III. *A hall in the palace.*

Enter a Crowd of frightened Women, and seem hurrying on to some place of greater security.

FIRST WOMAN. (*Stopping*).

No, we are wrong ; we'll to the eastern tower,
That is the most retir'd ; that last of all
Will tempt their search.

SECOND WOMAN.

In the deep vaulted caverns of the palace,
Might we not for a while conceal'd remain,
Till heav'n shall send us means ?

OMNES.

Ay, thou art right ; that is the best of all :
We'll to the vaults. (*As they are all turning and hurrying back again, enter a domestic Officer of the palace, and stops them.*)

OFFICER.

Where do you run with such wild looks of fear ?
Think ye the Turks are passing thro' the city,
Like the short visit of a summer's storm.
That you in holes and rocks may safely hide
Until it be o'erblown ?

FIRST WOMAN.

Oh, no ! we know that they are come for ever !
Yet for a little while we fain would save us
From fearful things.

OFFICER.

I come to tell you that by Mah'met's orders
The cruel Turks have stopp'd their bloody work,
And peace again is in our walls.

FIRST WOMAN.

Say'st thou?
And art thou sure of this? and hast thou seen it?

OFFICER.

Yes, I have seen it. Like a sudden gleam
Of fierce returning light at the storm's close,
Glancing on horrid sights of waste and sorrow,
Came the swift word of peace, and to the eye
Gave consciousness of that which the wild uproar
And dire confusion of the carnage hid.

FIRST WOMAN.

Alas! be there such fights within our walls?

OFFICER.

Yes, maid, such fights of blood! such fights of
nature!

In expectation of their horrid fate,
Widows, and childless parents, and 'lorn dames,
Sat by their unwept dead with fixed gaze,
In horrible stillness.

But when the voice of grace was heard aloud,
So strongly stirr'd within their roused souls
The love of life, that, even amidst those horrors,

A joy was seen—joy hateful and unlovely.
I saw an aged man rise from an heap
Of grizly dead, whereon, new murder'd, lay
His sons and grandsons, yea, the very babe
Whose cradle he had rock'd with palsied hands,
And shake his grey locks at the sound of life
With animation wild and horrible.
I saw a mother with her murder'd infant
Still in her arms fast lock'd, spring from the
ground—
No, no! I saw it not! I saw it not!
It was a hideous fancy of my mind:
I have not seen it.
But I forget my chiefest errand here.

FIRST WOMAN.

And what is that?

OFFICER.

It is to bid you tell your royal mistress,
It may, perhaps, somewhat assuage her grief,
That Othus and Rodrigo, with some followers,
The last remains of the imperial band,
Fighting, in all the strength of desperation,
Around the body of their fallen chief,
Have mov'd to gen'rous thoughts the sultan's breast;
Who has their valour honour'd with full leave,
In blessed ground, with military pomp,
Becoming his high state and valiant worth,
To lay his dear remains. This with their lives
On honourable terms he freely grants.

FIRST WOMAN.

And do those brave men live ?

OFFICER.

They do ; but Othus soon I fear will be
With him he mourns.—Delay no more, I pray :
Inform the empress speedily of this.

FIRST WOMAN.

Alas ! she is not in a state to hear it :
The phrenzy of her grief repels all comfort.—
But softly !—hush !—methinks I hear her voice.
She's coming hither in the restless wand'rings
Of her untamed mind.—Stand we aside,
And speak not to her yet.

*Enter VALERIA with her hair dishevelled, and in all
the wild disorder of violent sorrow, followed by
Ella and Lucia, who seem endeavouring to soothe
her.*

VALERIA.

Forbear all words, and follow me no more.
I now am free to wander where I list ;
To howl i' the desert with the midnight winds,
And fearless be amidst all fearful things.
The storm has been with me, and I am left
Torn and uprooted, and laid in the dust
With those whom after-blasts rend not again.
I am in the dark gulf where no light is.
I am on the deep bed of sunken floods,

Whose swoln and welt'ring billows rise no more
To bear the tossed wreck back to the strand.

LUCIA.

Oh, say not so ! heav'n doth in its good time
Send consolation to the sharpest woe.
It still in kindness sends to the tried soul
Its keenest suff'rings. So say holy men ;
And therein good men trust.

VALERIA.

I hear, I hear thee ! in mine ear thy voice
Sounds like the feeble night-fly's humming noise
To him, who in the warfare of vex'd sleep,
Strives with the phantoms of his inward world.
Yes, there be comfort when the sun is dark,
And time hath run his course, and the still'd sleepers
Lift up their heads at the tremendous crash
Of breaking worlds.—I know all this.—But here,
Upon this living earth, what is there found ?
It is a place of groans and hopeless woe.
Let me then tear my hair and wring my hands,
And raise my voice of anguish and despair,
This is my portion now, all else is gone,

LUCIA.

Nay, think not virtuous innocence forsaken :
Put in high heav'n thy trust, it will sustain thee.

VALERIA.

Ah ! I did think when virtue bravely stood,

Fronting its valiant breast to the fierce onset
 Of worthless power, that it full surely stood :
 That ev'ry spiritual and righteous power
 Was on its side : and in this faith, oftimes,
 Methought I could into the furnace mouth
 Have thrust my hand, and grasp'd the molten flames.
 Yet on his head it fell : that noble head,
 Upon whose manly gracefulness was fix'd
 The gaze of ev'ry eye.

Oh ! on his lib'ral front there beam'd a look,
 Unto the which all good and gen'rous hearts
 Answer return'd.—It was a gentle head,
 Bending in pleasant kindliness to all ;
 So that the timid, who approach'd him trembling,
 With cheer'd and vaunting steps retir'd again.
 It was a crowned head, yet was it left
 Expos'd and fenceless in the hour of danger :
 What should have been his safety was his bane.
 Away, poor mock'ry of a wretched state !

*(Tearing the regal ornaments from her neck, and
 scattering them about.)*

Be ye strew'd to the winds ! But for this let
 We had been blest ; for he as truly loved,
 In simplest tenderness, as the poor hind,
 Who takes his humble house-mate by the hand,
 And says, “ this is my all.”—Off, cursed band !
 Which round our happiness hath been entwin'd
 Like to a straggling cord : upon the earth

Be thou defac'd and trampled ! *(Tearing the tiara
 from her head and stamping upon it, then
 pacing up and down distractedly.)*

LUCIA.

Alas ! my royal mistress, be intreated !
 This furious grief will but enhance its pain :
 Oh, bear yourself as more becomes your state !

VALERIA.

Yes, I will bear me as becomes my state.
 I am a thing of wretchedness and ruin.
 That upon which my pride and being grew
 Lies in the dust, and be the dust my bed.

*(Throwing herself upon the ground, and pushing
 away Lucia and her other Attendants, who
 endeavour to raise her up again.)*

Forbear ! forbear ! and let me on the ground
 Spread out my wretched hands. It pleases me
 To think that in its breast there is a rest—
 Yea, there lie they, unheeded and forgotten,
 To whom all tongues give praise, all hearts give
 blessing.

Oh, ev'ry heart did bless him tho' he fell,
 And ne'er a saving hand was found—Oh ! oh !

*(Bursting into an agony of grief, and laying her
 head upon the ground, covered with both her
 hands.)*

ELLA *(to Lucia and Attendants)*.

Do not surround her thus ! I'll sit and watch her.
 I will not speak, but sit and weep by her ;
 And she shall feel, ev'n thro' her heavy woe,
 That sympathy and kindness are beside her.

VALERIA (*raising her head*).

There spoke a gentle voice : is Ella near me ?

ELLA.

Yes, I am near, and shall be ever near you.

VALERIA.

Wilt thou ? I do believe, sweet maid, thou wilt.
Lay thy soft hand on mine.—Yes, it feels kindly.
Had he, thy valiant love, been near his lord—
Ay, they did love each other with that love
Which brave men know—Oh, ev'ry noble stranger,
In admiration of his noble worth,
Did call him lord ; whilst they, his native subjects,
They who had seen him grow within their walls,—
Alas ! where lightly tripp'd his infant steps ;
Where in gay sports his stripling's strength was
tried ;
Where tower'd in graceful pride his manly bloom ;
Even there a lifeless, ghastly form he lies.

Enter another Domestic OFFICER, and seeing Valeria on the ground steps back.

LUCIA (*to the Officer*).

What would'st thou here ?

OFFICER.

I must, perforce, speak my unwelcome tidings.
The sultan is already in the palace,
And follows hard my steps with a fix'd purpose
To see the empress.

VALERIA (*raising herself half from the ground*).

What fearful words are these? in my soul's anguish

Comes this so quickly on me? Be it so!

I cleave to th' earth! what have I now to do?

I am a stilled thing, abas'd and crush'd;

What boots it now who gazes on my woe?

Enter MAHOMET with OSMIR and his Train.

MAHOMET (*to Osmir, after looking at Valeria steadfastly*).

She stirs not, Osmir, ev'n at my approach,

She sits upon the ground, unmov'd and still.

Thou sorrow-clouded beauty, not less lovely

(*Going up to her.*)

For this thy mournful state!—She heeds me not.

Empress and sov'reign dame, unto those titles

Which thou shalt ever wear, vouchsafe regard.

Still she regards me not.

(*To Osmir.*)

Widow of Constantine;

(*After a pause.*)

VALERIA (*rousing herself quickly*).

Ay, now thou callest on me by a name

Which I do hear. There is strength in the sound

To do all possible things! *Rising quickly from the ground, and accosting Mahomet with an air of high assumed state.*)

What would'st thou say to her who proudly wears
That honour'd title?

MAHOMET.

Widow of Constantine ; I come not here
 In the stern spirit of a conqu'ror.
 The slaughter of your people, by my order,
 Is stopp'd ; and to your bravely fallen lord
 I have decreed such fun'ral obsequies
 As suits a valiant warrior and a king.
 Othus, and brave Rodrigo, and those men
 Who to the last their master's corpse defended,
 I have with honour grac'd.—Lacks there aught
 still
 That, from the dark cloud which so deeply shades
 That awful beauty, one approving ray
 Might softly draw ? Speak, and it shall be done.

VALERIA.

Ask aught from thee !

MAHOMET.

Yes, whatsoe'er thou wilt :
 For now too well I feel I have no power
 That can oppose thy will.

VALERIA.

I give you thanks : I have a thing to ask.

MAHOMET.

Name it, and it is granted.

VALERIA.

A place in the quiet tomb with my fall'n lord,
Therein to rest my head. This is my boon.

MAHOMET.

Well, and it shall be granted, fair Valeria,
When that fair form is fitted for such rest.
But whilst— (*Approaching her with an air of freer
admiration.*)

VALERIA (*putting him at a distance haughtily*).

No more:—I do not ask it sooner.
Yet that it be a sealed deed between us,
Permit me here to put into your hands
A mark'd memorial. Some few paces off
It is deposited; I will return
And give it to you instantly. (*Exit, attended by
Lucia, Ella, &c.*)

MAHOMET (*to Osmir, looking after her as she goes
out*).

See, with what awful loveliness she moves!
Did all our bower'd prisons e'er contain
Aught like to that?

OSMIR.

It does, indeed, a wond'rous mixture seem
Of woman's loveliness with manly state;
And yet, methinks, I feel as tho' it were

Strange, and perplexing, and unsuitable.
 'Tis not in nature.

MAHOMET.

Think'st thou so, good vizir?
 Thou'rt right, belike, but it is wond'rous graceful.

(A loud shriek of women heard without.)

What shrieks are these? Run thou and learn the
 cause. *(Osмир going, is prevented by Valeria,
 who re-enters with her robe wrapped across
 her breast, and supported by Lucia, and Ella,
 and her other Attendants, who seem in great
 affliction round her.)*

VALERIA *(speaking as she enters)*.

Mourn not; the thing is past that was to be.
 Conduct me to the sultan: I have still
 Strength to fulfil my task.

MAHOMET.

Great Prophet! what is this? What hast thou
 done? *(To Valeria.)*

VALERIA.

Brought thee the mark'd memorial of my right.
(Shewing a dagger.)

And that I now am fitted for that rest,
 The honour'd rest which you have granted me,
 Being the fix'd condition of your promise,
 Here is the witness. *(Opening her robe, and shew-
 ing the wound in her breast.)*

MAHOMET.

Oh sad and cruel fight ! Is there no aid ?
Oh live, thou wond'rous creature, and be aught
Thy soul desires to be !

VALERIA (*after sinking back into a seat, supported by
her Attendants*).

I now am what my soul desires to be,
And what one happy moment of wound strength
Beyond the pitch of shrinking nature makes me ;
Widow of Constantine, without reproach,
And worthy to partake the honour'd rest
Of the brave lord whose living love I shar'd,
As shares the noble wife a brave man's love.

MAHOMET.

Prophet of God, be there such ties as these !

*Enter RODRIGO, and OTHUS wounded and sup-
porting himself feebly upon his sheathed sword.*

VALERIA.

And here come, in good time, my living friends :
I shall once more those gen'rous men behold,
The sad remains of those who lov'd their lord.

(*Holding out a hand to each of them.*)

You know brave brothers, how it is with me ;
For such you were to him, and such to me
My heart now truly owns you.

OTHUS.

Yes, we have heard : they told us as we enter'd.
Most noble woman, worthy of thy lord !

*(Endeavouring feebly to kneel and kiss her hand,
whilst Rodrigo does so on the other side of her.)*

VALERIA.

This day's rough tempest's o'er, my good Rod-
rigo,

And thou still liv'st to strive in other storms :
Heaven's high blessing and my dying thanks
Rest on thy gen'rous worth !—I would say more,
But now I feel I may not.

Where art thou, Ella ? *(Putting Ella's hand in his.)*

Here do I return

The trust thou gavest me ; and if the sultan
Will yet to me one last request vouchsafe,
He will confirm this gift.

MAHOMET.

It is confirm'd.

VALERIA.

I thank you, gracious victor.

Heaven blest you both ! *(To Ella and Rodrigo,
who both kneel and kiss her hands.)*

Othus, the dead go to their silent rest,

(To Othus, looking fixedly at him.)

And are no more remember'd : but thy lord—
He whom thou lovedst—he whom all hearts lov'd—

He who so noble and so gentle was—
Well skill'd art thou to paint the deeds of men—
Thou wilt not suffer him to be forgotten?
What means that woeful motion of thy head?
Mine eyes wax dim, or do I truly see thee?
Thy visage has a strange and ghastly look:
How is it with thee?

OTHUS.

As one who standeth at the city's gate,
Thro' which his earlier friends have past, and waits
Impatiently, girt in his traveller's robe,
To hear the welcome creaking of its bars.

VALERIA.

Ah! art thou wounded then? Alas! alas!
Art thou too of our company? sad trav'lers
Unto a world unknown.

OTHUS.

Nay, say not sad, tho' to a world unknown.
The foster'd nursling, at th' appointed season,
Who leaves his narrow crib and cottage-home
For the fair mansion of his lordly fire,
Goes to a world unknown.

VALERIA.

Ay, thou would'st cheer me, and I will be cheer'd.
There reigns above who casts his dark shade o'er us,
Mantling us on our way to glorious light.
I have offended, and I should be fearful,

F f

But there is sent in mercy to my heart,
 For which I humbly give —— O no, I may not!
 Death is upon me now.——Ella and Lucia:
 Stand cloſer to me: let me firmly graſp
 Something that I have lov'd. *(Catching hold of
 them with a convulſive graſp.)*

It will ſoon ceaſe:

Farewel unto ye all! *(Dies.)*
*(A ſolemn pauſe, all ſtanding round and gazing
 upon the body.)*

OTHUS.

And this is the laſt form that we do wear,
 Unto the ſad and ſolemn gaze of thoſe
 Who have beheld us in our days of joy.
 Honour and deepeſt rev'rence be to thee,
 Thou honour'd dead! *(Bowing reſpectfully to the
 body.)*

MAHOMET.

Great God of heav'n! was this a woman's ſpirit
 That took its flight?

RODRIGO.

Let ev'ry proudeſt worſhip be upon her,
 For ſhe is number'd with the gallant dead.
 Not in the trophied field, nor ſculptur'd dome;
 No, nor beneath the dark and billowy deep
 Lies one, o'er whom the valiant living would
 With truer zeal their lofty banners wave,
 Or bid the deep-mouth cannon nobly tell
 How brave men mourn the brave.

How is it, Othus ? something in thine eye
 Of joyous sadness looks upon me wistfully.
(To Othus, who takes him tenderly by the hand.)

OTHUS.

Dost thou not guess ?—But I would speak to
 thee
 Of a brave soldier, who, in one short moment
 Of nature's weakness, has a wound receiv'd
 That will unto his life as fatal prove
 As fellest foeman's thrust : who in his rest
 Will not be mourn'd as brave men mourn the
 brave.
 Justiniani in his cave of shame —

RODRIGO.

And therein let him perish !
 He hath disgrac'd a soldier's honest fame :
 He hath disgrac'd the country of his birth :
 He hath —— It makes me stamp upon the ground
 To think that one, who grasp'd with brother's
 hand
 The noble Constantine, should basely turn.
 Name not his cursed name !

OTHUS.

Art thou so stern ? In a lone cave he groans,
 On the damp earth, in deepest agony
 Of the soul's shrewdest sufferings. I have
 By an old soldier been advis'd of this,
 And I would go to him, but that I feel

I needs must go where a more powerful call
Doth summon me.

RODRIGO (*softened*).

Ah ! must thou then so soon, my gen'rous Othus !
Must thou so soon ? Well, ask whate'er thou
wilt :

I give my chafed passion to the winds.

Ah ! goest thou ? Do I the last remain
Of those who lov'd the noble Constantine ?
The last of a brave band ? Alas ! alas !

(*Embracing Othus tenderly.*)

OSMIR (*to Mahomet, who strides up and down in
gloomy agitation*).

Most mighty Mahomet, what thus disturbs you ?
May not your slave in humble zeal be told ?

MAHOMET.

Away ! away ! thy humble zeal I know ;
Yea, and the humble zeal of such as thou art.
The willing service of a brave man's heart,
That precious pearl, upon the earth exists,
But I have found it not.

(*Turning to Othus and Rodrigo.*)

Ye valiant men who have so serv'd your prince,
There still is in the world a mighty monarch,
Who, if he might retain you near his throne,
Shall he say near his heart, in such dear zeal ?
Would think his greatness honour'd.

OTHUS.

Great sultan, thou hast conquer'd with such arms
 As power has given to thee, th' imperial city
 Of royal Constantine ; but other arms,
 That might the friends of Constantine subdue,
 Heav'n has denied thee.

RODRIGO.

No, mighty prince ; they who have serv'd for
 love,
 Cannot like flying pennants be transferr'd
 From bark to bark.

MAHOMET (*impatiently*).

I understand you well, and you are free.
 Mine arms, such as they are, of heav'n are bless'd,
 That is enough.

OTHUS.

That were indeed enough ; but heaven oft-times
 Success bestows where blessing is denied.
 A secret spirit whispers to my heart,
 That in these walls your weaken'd wretched race,
 Slaves of their slaves, in gloomy prison'd pomp
 Shall shed each others blood, and make these towers
 A place of groans and anguish, not of bliss,
 And think not when the good and valiant perish
 By worldly power o'erwhelm'd, that heaven's high
 favour
 Shines not on them.—Oh, no ! then shines it most.

For then in them it shews th' approving world
The worth of its best work.

And from their fate a glorious lesson springs ;
A lesson of such high ennobling power ;
Connecting us with such exalted things
As all do feel, but none with such true force,
Such joy, such triumph, as a dying man.

(Falling back into the arms of Rodrigo.)

FINIS.

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